



Two Chapters From

# PRACTICAL LESSONS

by F.C. Gilbert







CHAPTER IX  
JESUS TEACHING THE TRUE VIEW  
OF THE KINGDOM  
&

CHAPTER XIX  
THE PROPHET ELIJAH, AND  
HIS WORK OF PREPARATION

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## **CHAPTER IX**

### **JESUS TEACHING THE TRUE VIEW OF THE KINGDOM**

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart. Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isa. 35:3-5.

**W**HEN the Messiah came to visit and to redeem His people,<sup>1</sup> it was not his purpose to teach any new religion. Neither the Father nor the Son had made any plan that the truth of God, as taught in the Old Testament, should be overthrown.

<sup>1</sup>Luke 1:68; 7:16.

or that with the advent of the Holy Messiah another religion should be set up.<sup>2</sup>

2. We find recorded in the early days of the Babe of Bethlehem, that His mother took Him into the house of the Lord, and followed the custom in regard to little children as recorded in the Pentateuch.<sup>3</sup> When the father of John the Baptist was under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he said:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."<sup>4</sup>

#### CHRIST'S COMING FULFILLED SCRIPTURE

From this scripture, it is seen that this man of God said by the inspiration of God that the coming of the Holy Messiah and the coming of His forerunner, John the Baptist, was to fulfil that which had been promised by the Lord to Abraham and to David, and which had been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the beginning of the world.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>John 5: 45-47.    <sup>3</sup>Luke 2: 21-24.    <sup>4</sup>Luke 1: 68-74.

<sup>5</sup>Acts 3:18, 21.

3. The coming of the Saviour to earth was to make clear and plain to the people what had already been predicted in the writings of the prophets. Here is a prediction of great value:

"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest."<sup>6</sup>

And the following testimony in the New Testament will clearly show who is meant by this person:

"Wherefore when he [that is, Jesus] cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."<sup>7</sup>

4. Thus we see that it was predicted in the word of God that when the Messiah should appear, He would not destroy or do away with the truth of God which had been taught and which had been believed prior to His appearing. He was to come to declare what had been said of Him in the volume of the Book. He was to come to fulfil all that had been prophesied of Him.<sup>8</sup> He would come and prove that what had been written of Him was true.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 40: 6-9.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. 10: 5-7.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 13: 38, 39.



**The Volume of the Book**

## THE TRUTH COVERED BY TRADITION

5. A great deal of the truth, however, which the people had in their possession was so covered up by the rubbish of men, that one phase of His mission was to destroy those erroneous ideas. This Jesus Himself said was part of His work:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and I should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter



things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."<sup>10</sup>

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

6. Here we see that He had come to expose the errors of their tradition, and to make plain the truth of God which had already been given to them. He had not come to shake their faith in the word of God,<sup>12</sup> or to change their belief in the law of God,<sup>13</sup> in the testimony of the prophets,<sup>14</sup> or in the teachings of the sacred Scriptures.<sup>15</sup> These Holy Oracles were the same as they were when the Lord originally inspired them, and he desired the people to know that he had no thought nor wish to say anything different concerning them than they had been taught to believe. But there were so many strange and peculiar notions given to the people as interpretation of those truths of God's word, that it was part of His work to

<sup>10</sup>Matt. 13: 10-17, 34, 35. <sup>11</sup>Isa. 29: 13, 14; Matt. 15: 7-9.

<sup>12</sup>Luke 16: 31. <sup>13</sup>Matt. 5: 17. <sup>14</sup>Luke 24: 27.

<sup>15</sup>Luke 24: 47; John 5: 39.

tear off the mask covering these precious truths, and place them before the people in their true setting.<sup>16</sup> The people had the light, they had the candle, they had the lamp;<sup>17</sup> but it was covered with human rubbish; hence the light did not shine.<sup>18</sup> The lamp needed trimming. To trim the light was one of the features of Christ's mission.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE JEWS TAUGHT CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

7. One of the truths which the Jews had been taught to believe, was that there was to be a kingdom set up for them. They were instructed by the rabbis that when the Messiah appeared, the kingdom of God would be set up. The people were instructed that there awaited them many beautiful glories when the Holy One of Israel should come; and at that time the Lord would more than compensate them for the sorrows, the trials, and the sufferings, they had endured. The leaders quoted many scriptures to them from the word of God to show them that when the Messiah appeared, there would be a great glory for them; that if they only followed what the rabbis said, and were true to the teachings of the word of God as outlined by these leaders, all would be well with them at the appearance of the Sent One of God.

8. This idea of the kingdom was a Scriptural one. It had been taught in the word of God for hundreds of years; and Israel looked for its coming a long

<sup>16</sup>John 8: 12.

<sup>17</sup>Psa. 119: 105.

<sup>18</sup>Matt. 5: 15, 16.

<sup>19</sup>John 1: 7-9.

time. Among the passages used to prove that the kingdom would come, and that it would be set up, were those brought to view in the prophecy of Daniel. These passages are among the prominent ones that the rabbis claimed were given by inspiration for the hope and encouragement of the people. Here are some of them:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

"And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

"But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."<sup>20</sup>

9. Of course there were many passages that they selected from the writings of other prophets; but they held before the people the idea that there was to be a kingdom set up, and this kingdom would last forever. It was very easy for the rabbis to convince the people that Israel meant the saints.<sup>21(a)</sup> It was therefore for the Jews that this kingdom was to be set up. The Scripture taught that it was the saints who should

<sup>20</sup>Dan. 2: 44; 7: 22, 27, 28.      <sup>21</sup>Ps. 50: 4; 145: 10.

take the kingdom.<sup>22</sup> When the saints took this kingdom, no other people would have any chance to get it. So everybody that was not a son of Abraham would have no part in this kingdom. There was therefore no hope that any person would ever share in this kingdom but the Jews.

10. Every successive generation of rabbis increased ideas concerning this kingdom; and what one rabbi or one rabbinical school did not say in its favor, other rabbis and other schools said. It was impressed upon the Jews that the kingdom must come, and it must be set up when the Messiah appeared. Therefore it was the longing of the people all the time for the Messiah to come, and for the kingdom to be established.

#### THE KINGDOM TO BE IN JERUSALEM

11. The idea was also prevalent among the Jews that this kingdom would be established in Jerusalem. The rabbis taught that since Jerusalem was the place which God had selected to place His name in, that must be the place where the kingdom would have to be set up. Here is the scripture:

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

<sup>22</sup> Dan. 7: 18.

they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."<sup>23</sup>

Here the rabbis claimed they had certain ground for believing that the kingdom would be erected in Jerusalem, and this would be the place where the saints; that is, all the children of Israel, (b) would finally gather, and enjoy the glories of the good things which the Messiah would bring to them at His appearing.

12. For some time prior to the appearing of the Messiah, there had been a feeling among the people that the time was at hand when Messiah should come.<sup>24</sup> As in the days of their ancestors in Egypt, when they were in deep sorrow and affliction the Lord heard their cries and sent a deliverer and brought them forth from the land of Egypt,<sup>25</sup> so they felt that the time must soon come when the Lord would send them the promised Deliverer, the Holy Messiah, and free them from their terrible affliction which they were enduring at the hands of Rome. They believed that a Deliverer would surely be raised up, and then they would triumph over their enemies.<sup>26</sup>

#### EATING AND DRINKING IN THE KINGDOM

13. The rabbis also instructed the people that when Messiah came and set up this kingdom, it would be a time of great rejoicing and much enjoyment.<sup>27</sup> The rabbis had the program all arranged, the plans were suited to their own tastes,<sup>28</sup> and an elaborate affair it

<sup>23</sup>Ps. 122: 1-7.      <sup>24</sup>Luke 2: 25, 38.      <sup>25</sup>Ex. 2: 23-25; 3: 7, 9.

<sup>26</sup>Luke 1: 74.      <sup>27</sup>Rev. 19: 7.      <sup>28</sup>Mark 12: 38, 39.

was to be. Since this kingdom was to be for the saints, and the saints are only those who are Israelites, the most prominent of the Israelites would be the most prominent in this kingdom. Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were the fathers and patriarchs of the children of Israel, they were to be among the first ones in this kingdom.<sup>20</sup> It was arranged that the wise men would be near to them in order of succession. The rabbis and the sages had so arranged it that they would be very much in evidence in that glorious kingdom. The rabbis also taught that when this kingdom was established, it would really be the "World to Come,"<sup>21</sup> the "Garden of Eden." In their minds, they had associated these ideas. Some of this authority they said they had gathered from the Scripture; and some they had inferred from the Scripture, but settled by their own traditions.

14. Inasmuch as this kingdom was to be the "*Olam A-ba*," the future, the world to come, the rabbis said that in this glorious kingdom there would be eating, drinking, and plenty to delight the senses.<sup>22</sup> After the idea had been promulgated by the leaders and sages that there was to be eating and drinking in the future abode of bliss, when the Messiah would set up the kingdom,<sup>23</sup> the rabbis felt it incumbent upon them to have the bill of fare all arranged. There are many things in the New Testament which indicate that

<sup>20</sup>Luke 13: 28.

<sup>21</sup>Heb. 2: 5; 6: 5.

<sup>22</sup>Luke 14: 15.

<sup>23</sup>Luke 22: 30.

this was the view the people held at that time. And to this very day, the pious orthodox Jew has the bill of fare all made out of the things that they are to have in the kingdom.

15. The rabbis taught that two dishes would especially be enjoyed in the kingdom; one was to be a dish of flesh, and the other a dish of fish. This is still the current view of the pious orthodox Jew. Perhaps it may be of interest to the reader to notice a few of these statements as recorded in the writings of the Jews:

"He will certainly bestow on us the portion which he hath promised of old. The sporting of Leviathan with the ox of the high mountains [this the rabbis refer to the behemoth of Job 40:15, etc.] when they shall approach each other and engage in battle. With his horn he thrusts at the mightiest beasts, but the Leviathan will leap towards him with his fins and great strength. His Creator will then approach him with his great sword, and will prepare him for a banquet for the righteous, who will be seated at a table formed of jasper and carbuncle, with a river of balm flowing before them. Then they will delight themselves and be satisfied with the bowls of wine prepared at the creation, and reserved in the wine-press." — *"Prayers for the Day of Pentecost," translated by D. Levy, and quoted in "Old Paths."*

16. As to this great ox referred to in Job 40:15, one commentator, Ralbag, says:

"Behemoth is the name of a great beast."

Another commentator, the learned Rashi, says:

"Behemoth, that is prepared for the time to come."

He says further, in his comment on the text, Psalm 50: 10, that the words *Behemoth Beharra Ellef*,—which we translate, "the cattle upon a thousand hills,"—refer to "Behemoth upon a thousand hills;" and then he adds:

"This is he that is prepared for the banquet of the tin to come; for he eats up the produce of a thousand hills one day, and every day it grows again."

Another eminent commentator, Jonathan, in his Targum, says:

"For every beast of the wood is mine, and I have prepared for the righteous in Paradise pure cattle, and the wild ox [the Hebrew words for this wild ox are, *Shor Abor*, term understood by every orthodox Jew to refer to the great animal which is to be killed for the great supper in Paradise that feeds every day upon a thousand mountains."

This is this commentator's paraphrase of verse ten in the fiftieth psalm. More might be mentioned concerning the meat menu, but this must suffice.

17. Now for a few statements concerning the fish part of the bill of fare:

"Rabbi Judah said, Rav said, Everything that God created in this world he created male and female. And thus he did with Leviathan the piercing, and Leviathan the crooked serpent; he created them male and female. But if they had been united, they would have desolated the entire world. What, then, did the Holy One do? He took away the strength of the male Leviathan, and slew the female, and salted her for the righteous for the time to come, for it is written, 'And he shall slay the whale that is in the sea.' In like manner with regard to Behemoth, upon



a thousand mountains. He created them male and female, but if they had been united they would have desolated the entire world. What then did the Holy One do? He took away the strength of the male Behemoth, and made the female barren, and preserved her for the righteous for the time to come." — "*Bava Bathra.*"

18. Again another rabbi, Moses the son of Nachman, says:

"And our rabbis have said that the great whales mean Leviathan and his mate; for God created them male and female, and salted her for the righteous for the time to come."

Another rabbi, Maimondies, sums up the whole situation as follows:

"The great hope is, that Messiah shall come and raise the dead, and they shall be gathered into Paradise, and there shall eat and drink, and be in good health to all eternity." — "*Sanhedrin.*"

19. This idea of having a menu spread in the kingdom is one that has been held by the Jews for more than two thousand years. The rabbis suggested what they thought should be the menu, and sought to find Scripture as evidence that it was so. Inasmuch as the people at the time of the advent of the Messiah had many of these ideas, it must have afforded a great deal of joy and pleasure to the people when John the Baptist announced to them that the time had come when the Messiah would appear, and that the kingdom of God was very near.<sup>33</sup> The rabbis had taught

<sup>33</sup>Matt. 3: 2.

that they were to receive very great honors in this kingdom to come,<sup>24</sup> and the Messiah would honor them above all others at His appearing.

20. They furthermore taught that while every Israelite would sometime have a part in this world to come,<sup>25</sup> the sages and wise men would be the "elect." They were to be a sort of aristocracy in the "world to come." The rest of the people would not be in condition to appreciate this glorious abode of bliss and felicity, because they had not had the education and the preparation. It meant that a person, to enjoy the glories of the future kingdom, must be a wise man,<sup>26</sup> and must have a great deal of learning. The masses of the people, known as *Am-arat-sew*, illiterate, uneducated, would not be entirely cast away. They would have a small place somewhere; but the men who were wise, and had spent much time in study and preparation in the law, would be the "elect." They would be the specially favored class when the Messiah, or Deliverer, should come.

#### JOHN PREACHING THE KINGDOM

21. This in general was the idea held by the rabbis and the people at the time when our Lord was to appear. John the Baptist heralded the approach of the coming of the Messiah.<sup>27</sup> When John began his work, the people doubtless wondered what he would

<sup>24</sup>James 2: 1, 2.      <sup>25</sup>Isa. 60: 21.      <sup>26</sup>Jer. 8: 8, 9; Isa. 29: 14.

<sup>27</sup>John 1: 26, 27.



**John the Baptist**

say. They no doubt wondered what his announcement would be. So, in his message, he said:

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>20</sup>

The key-note struck,—the kingdom,—seemed in harmony with what the rabbis had taught; but there was a peculiar teaching in connection with his work. He taught that the people should repent. In fact one salient feature of his work seemed to be, calling the people to repentance. This was not considered a part of the work of the "world to come." John, however, continued his message:

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."<sup>21</sup>

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance."<sup>22</sup>

"And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."<sup>23</sup>

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance."<sup>24</sup>

22. There is no doubt but that many of the people were perplexed as they heard the words of this messenger. Surely he could not be the man that the rabbis had been telling about. It is true that he began his work by introducing the coming of the kingdom; but the burden of his work seems to be that we should repent. What have we done that we need to repent? Have we not been true and pious

<sup>20</sup>Matt. 3: 2.    <sup>21</sup>Matt. 3: 8.    <sup>22</sup>Matt. 3: 11.    <sup>23</sup>Luke 3: 3

<sup>24</sup>Luke 3: 7, 8.

Jews? Have we not followed the teachings of the rabbis?<sup>43</sup> Have we not followed Abraham,<sup>44</sup> and have we not had the rite of circumcision performed?<sup>45</sup> Have not our rabbis taught us that when the time came, we should be the ones who would have a part in the world to come? Why do we need to repent? Can this really be the Messiah? It would seem that this was just the condition of the people at this time; for it is written:

"And as the people were in expectation [margin, in suspense]. and all men mused [margin, reasoned or debated] in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."<sup>46</sup>

This was especially true of the prominent ones among the rabbis and the Pharisees; for when they went to hear him, John said unto them:

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Matt. 23: 4.      <sup>44</sup>Matt. 3: 9.      <sup>45</sup>John. 7: 22.  
<sup>46</sup>Luke 3: 15-18.      <sup>47</sup>Matt. 3: 7-9.

It would seem from the teaching of John that all their calculations were to be upset. If what he taught were true, then where would be their glory in the "world to come," the kingdom of God that had been promised? His preaching was as applicable to the leaders as to the masses.<sup>48</sup> There seemed to be no difference with him. He taught the ordinary man as he denounced the leading man. He put them all in the same class.<sup>49</sup> He said that rabbi, priest, elder, Pharisee, and publican were all on a common ground, and all needed the same work done to be ready for the kingdom.<sup>50</sup>

#### ERRONEOUS IDEAS OF THE KINGDOM HELD

BY RABBIS

24. This was not in harmony with their views. This man could not be sent of God. The leaders and the teachers decided that his views of the "world to come" and the glories of the new kingdom were all out of harmony with what they believed and expected. They would not encourage the people either to believe that John was right. Especially did they frown on his work when they saw how friendly he seemed to the poor, despised publicans and sinners.<sup>51</sup> It seemed to them as though these very ones that were not expected to have had preparation for this coming kingdom, were the ones that John took great interest in; these very despised ones were coming to him in

<sup>48</sup>Luke 3: 7-14.

<sup>49</sup>Mark 1: 3-8.

<sup>50</sup>John 1: 19-27.

<sup>51</sup>Luke 3: 12.

flocks to be baptized;<sup>52</sup> and he was baptizing them.<sup>53</sup> No, no; this man has not the correct message of the kingdom. There will be no good time for us according to his teaching and preaching.

25. The result was that the Pharisees and leaders repudiated John and his message of the kingdom; they concluded that the Baptist was in error. His views were not in harmony with what they believed and advocated; therefore he was wrong. Part of his message was right; namely, that the time was here when the kingdom should be established; but the message of repentance and of preparation, this was not the teaching now that the people needed. So the word of God says:

"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."<sup>54</sup>

#### THE MESSIAH PREACHING THE KINGDOM

26. The messenger further announced the coming of the Messiah to be at hand;<sup>55</sup> shortly afterward Jesus appeared, and was baptized.<sup>56</sup> He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil;<sup>57</sup> and for about six weeks he was away from the people.<sup>58</sup> After he returned, he began His public labors, and this was His message as He commenced His work:

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the

<sup>52</sup>Luke 18: 10, 11.

<sup>53</sup>Luke 7: 29.

<sup>54</sup>Luke 7: 30.

<sup>55</sup>Luke 3: 16.

<sup>56</sup>Mark 1: 9-11.

<sup>57</sup>Matt. 4: 1.

<sup>58</sup>Matt. 4: 2.



Messiah Announcing the Kingdom of God



kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."<sup>59</sup>

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>60</sup>

27. The Messiah began His labors by announcing the kingdom of heaven at hand. He *also* called the people to repentance. His work then followed along the same line as that of John.<sup>61</sup> It should also be observed that in the Saviour's work, as He began, He told the people to repent, and to believe this good news.<sup>62</sup> They had been waiting for and expecting the good news of the coming Messiah and of the setting up of this glorious kingdom; now the Messiah says the good news is here,—the kingdom is at hand. In order for you to be in condition to receive the good news and all that I am to bring to you with regard to this kingdom, you must repent. If you do not repent, you will not be able to appreciate what I have for you.

28. Shortly after He inaugurated His work, He selected twelve disciples;<sup>63</sup> and these He sent forth among the people.<sup>64</sup> This was the message they were to bear among the people who were looking for the kingdom:

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>65</sup>

A little later He selected seventy men, and made

<sup>59</sup>Mark 1: 14, 15.

<sup>60</sup>Matt. 4: 17.

<sup>61</sup>Matt. 11: 7-10.

<sup>62</sup>Mark 1: 15.

<sup>63</sup>Matt. 10: 1.

<sup>64</sup>Matt. 10: 5.

<sup>65</sup>Matt. 10: 7.

them messengers of His work among the people. Of them the Scripture says:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."<sup>66</sup>

#### PREPARING THE WAY

29. It is observed from this message that the Saviour was sending out these disciples to prepare the way for Him to follow.<sup>67</sup> The one central thought of their teaching was to be the kingdom. In this way they would show to the people that the time had really

<sup>66</sup>Luke 10: 1-9.

<sup>67</sup>Luke 10: 1.

come when the message of the kingdom was due.<sup>68</sup> He wanted the disciples to do what they could to change the sentiment of the people in regard to the kingdom; for there was a terrible disappointment awaiting them.<sup>69</sup> Their entire views of the kingdom were to be changed. All they had heard and learned of the rabbis on this subject was wrong.<sup>70</sup> The rabbis had given them an incorrect view of the word of God concerning the kingdom.<sup>71</sup> The rabbis had not misled them by telling them that a kingdom was to be established. They had not falsified when they told the people the Deliverer would come and the kingdom would be established. This part of the teaching of the rabbis was true; but the leaders had perverted the word of God. They had given the people strange, mystical, and erroneous ideas of this kingdom;<sup>72</sup> and he wished these forerunners to prepare the way by announcing to the people that the kingdom of God not only was at hand, but it had come nigh to them.<sup>73</sup> That is to say, the Messiah wanted these disciples themselves to know that in the coming of the Messiah, the kingdom of God had come; and in order for the people to understand the nature, the work, and the purpose of the kingdom, they must repent of their sins, and be in condition to receive the good news.

30. Further: Instead of the people's expecting that the kingdom of God was about to be set up from

<sup>68</sup>Mark 1: 15.    <sup>69</sup>Luke 24: 21.    <sup>70</sup>John 8: 24.    <sup>71</sup>Luke 11: 52

<sup>72</sup>Matt. 23: 13.

<sup>73</sup>Luke 10: 11.

a rabbinical point of view, the disciples were to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out devils,<sup>74</sup> and to do such things as the people would appreciate as blessings. In this way, it was doubtless the desire of the Messiah to prepare the people for a correct understanding of the kingdom of God.

#### JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES HEALING THE SICK

31. The Saviour went about the cities and villages healing all that needed help,<sup>75</sup> and helping all that would believe in Him.<sup>76</sup> There was not a soul who needed assistance that He refused.<sup>77</sup> He fed the people when they were hungry;<sup>78</sup> He raised their dead when they asked Him;<sup>79</sup> He opened the eyes of their blind;<sup>80</sup> He did everything that He possibly could to make the people happy.<sup>81</sup> At the same time that he was doing this kind of work, He was preaching to the people that the kingdom of heaven was with them,<sup>82</sup> was among them,<sup>83</sup> was at hand.<sup>84</sup> The following scripture brings out the thought very clearly:

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed

<sup>74</sup>Matt. 10: 8.

<sup>75</sup>Matt. 9: 35.

<sup>76</sup>Mark 9: 23, 24.

<sup>77</sup>Matt. 11: 28; John 6: 37. <sup>78</sup>Matt. 14: 15-21.

<sup>79</sup>Luke 8: 41-55.

<sup>80</sup>Matt. 20: 30-34.

<sup>81</sup>Mark 7: 37.

<sup>82</sup>Luke 4: 43.

<sup>83</sup>Luke 17: 20, 21.

<sup>84</sup>Matt. 4: 17.

with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them."<sup>85</sup>

32. No doubt the people as well as the disciples became perplexed concerning the kingdom. Instead of the Messiah's telling them about the beautiful times they were going to have in the kingdom, in the way of eating and drinking and merrymaking, He was preaching that they should have faith in God.<sup>86</sup> He was telling them that they should be kind and loving and merciful and gracious.<sup>87</sup> He was teaching them that hardly any one was ready for the kingdom,<sup>88</sup> because of their conditions and their dispositions.<sup>89</sup> He was giving them new and different views of the kingdom than they had been accustomed to hear.

33. In His first public sermon, the Sermon on the Mount,<sup>90</sup> He told them some things in regard to the kingdom. In order to be a member of that kingdom, the people had to be contrite in spirit; they had to be humble and meek; they had to be merciful and pure; they had to be reviled and persecuted.<sup>91</sup> In order to enter into that kingdom, they would have to be changed people. Instead of having some peculiar change in their lives and conduct after they entered into that kingdom, the change must come beforehand.<sup>92(c)</sup>

<sup>85</sup>Matt. 4: 23, 24.

<sup>86</sup>Mark 11: 22.

<sup>87</sup>Matt. 5: 3-9.

<sup>88</sup>Matt. 20: 21, 22.

<sup>89</sup>Luke 9: 54-56.

<sup>90</sup>Matt. 5: 1.

<sup>91</sup>Matt. 5: 11, 12.

<sup>92</sup>Matt. 5: 5, 8.

## JESUS GIVES TRUE IDEA OF THE KINGDOM

34. Certainly this was a new order of things.<sup>80</sup> This was surely a change in teaching. Indeed, this was altogether unexpected. Yet it was not changing the word of God to teach in this way. This method of teaching was in harmony with the word of God.<sup>81</sup> In fact, it was the true teaching of the word of God.<sup>82</sup> It was unmasking the rabbinical teachings, but it was the truth of God concerning the kingdom. In order that the people might get this point strongly, the Messiah said:

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>83</sup>

35. The Saviour practically said that the very ones who claimed to be the chief exponents of the word of God concerning the "world to come," "the Paradise of God," the kingdom of God, were the ones who would not get there at all. The rabbis and leaders who professed to have the keys of this kingdom, to unlock it at their will, and admit all whom they thought worthy to go in there,<sup>84</sup> would be the ones who would not enjoy its bliss at all.<sup>85</sup> Is there not much force and significance in the following statements of the Saviour in view of the previous statements?

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac,

<sup>80</sup>Matt. 9: 16, 17.    <sup>81</sup>Matt. 7: 12.    <sup>82</sup>Deut. 18: 18, 19.

<sup>83</sup>Matt. 5: 20.    <sup>84</sup>Matt. 8: 12.    <sup>85</sup>Matt. 23: 24-28.

and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>99</sup>

36. Would this indicate, then, that the Pharisees and the scribes had taught the people no truth at all? Would this saying of Jesus show that the Pharisees did not lead the people into any truth? Would not this statement of the Messiah prove that He repudiated the Pharisees entirely, and would eventually overthrow all the religion and teaching which they had inculcated? In other words, would not this statement of the Saviour indicate that all that the Pharisees had taught the people, whether from the Bible,—the Law, the Prophets, and the Scriptures,—or from any other source, He was about to overturn, that he might institute a new order of things—a new religion, a new kingdom, a new way of worshipping God? Let the Messiah answer this question. Here are the words of the Master:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: *all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."<sup>100</sup>

37. The Saviour did not come to overthrow the teachings of the word of God. In all His labors and in all His teachings, He took the word of God as His standard of authority.<sup>101</sup> He recognized that the Pharisees were called to do the work that Moses did.

<sup>99</sup>Matt. 8: 11, 12.

<sup>100</sup>Matt. 23: 1-3.

<sup>101</sup>Matt. 8: 1-4.

They were the teachers of the people, called to teach them the word of God. As far as the leaders taught the people the word of God as Moses gave it to them, they were to follow such teaching. Jesus recognized the authority and instruction of Moses.<sup>102</sup> He recognized that the Pharisees and scribes taught Moses and the prophets. He told the people to follow the teachings of these men as far as they taught the truth of Moses; but not to follow them in their conduct. They said Moses taught certain things; and by their traditions and by their wrong views of the words of God, they perverted all the truth they taught. They said one thing, and acted another.<sup>103</sup> Their phylacteries, their desire to be rabbis, their desire for supremacy, their traditions concerning many things,—all these were not in harmony with the teachings of Moses.<sup>104</sup> These things were not an exposition of the word of Moses; therefore, the Messiah told the people not to follow the leaders in these things. He told the people not to obey their traditions. He came to tear off the mask of tradition,<sup>105</sup> but He did not come to do away with the religion of the Bible. This was the same religion now as the true religion always had been; but the traditions which were placed upon this religion, He had come to destroy and to thrust aside.

#### JESUS TEACHES BY PARABLES

38. That the people might have a correct view of

<sup>102</sup>John 5: 45-47.

<sup>103</sup>Matt. 23: 27, 28.

<sup>104</sup>Matt. 23: 5-10.

<sup>105</sup>Col. 2: 20-22.



the kingdom, the Master taught them a great many parables.<sup>106</sup> In these parables He sought to make clear to their understanding the true nature and import of the kingdom. He never for an instant allowed them to think that there was not to be a kingdom set up. He never breathed one word to oppose the idea of the kingdom as the people had been taught. It was the wrong views of the kingdom that they had been taught that He was seeking to undo. He tried to show them the true view of the Scriptures concerning the kingdom. For this reason he opened to their understanding the nature and purpose of the kingdom.<sup>107</sup>

39. There was no doubt another reason why He spoke to them of the kingdom by parables. He knew well what the rabbis had taught the people, and He also knew that His teaching would be contrary to what the Pharisees had taught. To come out openly and publicly expose their errors, and in this way tear off the mask, the Master knew would arouse much prejudice. It would be of little use to drive out the darkness by sweeping it out with a hard brush. The better way to rid the darkness from the soul would be to let the light shine.<sup>108</sup> In this way, the Messiah could teach the truth of the kingdom; He could expose the errors that had been taught; He could show the people the contrast between the truth and the error; He could make even the Pharisees, the opposers,

<sup>106</sup>Matt. 13: 3, 34, 35.      <sup>107</sup>Matt. 13: 3-50.      <sup>108</sup>John 1: 7-9.

see the contrast between their views and His views of the word of God.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, He could clothe His language with such figures that no one of the leaders could claim that they were being exposed, for fear that they would bring condemnation upon themselves.<sup>110</sup> No one but God could do this; Jesus did it, and He did it well.<sup>111</sup>

40. By studying these parables of the kingdom, as recorded in Matthew 13, it will be seen that Jesus taught that the first and most important thing concerning the kingdom was for men to have a pure heart. The kingdom would first have to be established in the human heart, and everything that was in the human heart unlike God and unlike the teaching and conduct of the Master, would have to be eliminated.<sup>112</sup> So the first principle of the kingdom of God is conduct. The first requisite is to have a changed heart, a new life; it is to be born again.<sup>113</sup>

41. Jesus did not stop here. He went on to show that when an individual has the King in his soul, the King's law in his heart, and is under direct and full control of the government of the King, the time will come when this individual will have a beautiful place, a kingdom, to go into.<sup>114</sup> Jesus did not leave the people with the impression that all of the kingdom of God was the pure life. In order to get into the beau-

<sup>109</sup>Matt. 21:45.      <sup>110</sup>Matt. 21:46; Mark 14:2.

<sup>111</sup>John 1:49; Mark 7:37.      <sup>112</sup>Matt. 13:4-8, 18-23.

<sup>113</sup>John 3:3.      <sup>114</sup>Matt. 13:43.

tiful place, there must first be a beautiful life;<sup>115</sup> while we are fitting up the life, the Lord is fitting up the place.<sup>116</sup> There must be the kingdom within first, before we can enter into the kingdom. After the kingdom has been established in us, then we shall be established in it.<sup>117</sup>

42. When all who shall believe in this view of the kingdom shall be accepted it is then that the wicked will be separated from the good, and everything that is vile will be cast out.<sup>118</sup> In other words, before the kingdom of God is set up in its glory and in its power, all people must have the kingdom of God's grace set up in their hearts; otherwise, they will never have any part in the kingdom of glory.<sup>119</sup> There will not be allowed to enter into that kingdom of blessedness and happiness anything that is defiling or unclean.<sup>120</sup> This the Messiah made very clear at the beginning of His exposition of the kingdom, as He knew it was taught by the word of God.

43. He said, furthermore, that the world would know of this view of the kingdom before the glorious kingdom would be set up.<sup>121</sup> Those who would accept Him as the Messiah and Saviour would have this kingdom of grace set up in their hearts.<sup>122</sup> These would be born again, and would be changed into this blessed kingdom of peace and righteousness. They would have

<sup>115</sup>Matt. 13: 47-50.      <sup>116</sup>John 14: 1, 2.      <sup>117</sup>Rom. 14: 17.

<sup>118</sup>Matt. 13: 40-42.      <sup>119</sup>Matt. 25: 31; 16: 27.      <sup>120</sup>Rev. 21: 27.

<sup>121</sup>Matt. 13: 38-42.      <sup>122</sup>1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.

such a taste of joy and peace in Him, after He dwelt in them,<sup>122</sup> that they would long to tell this good news to every one who would listen. They would have a kingdom of peace in their heart, in order to enter a kingdom of glory. When that work should be finished, and the whole world should be warned of the nature and the work of the Messiah, then the end would come, and the glorious kingdom of God would be set up.<sup>123</sup> All those who had not accepted of His law and of His grace, would be burned up in the fire, and would have no part in the world to come, in the kingdom of God.<sup>124</sup>

#### THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM

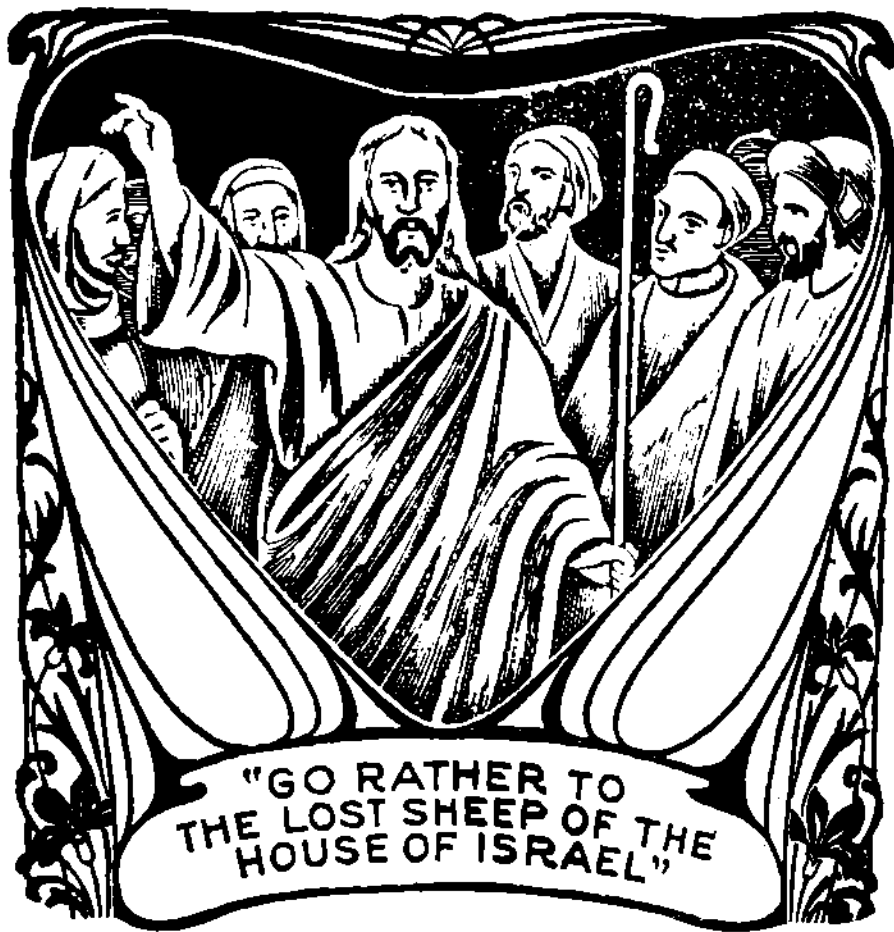
44. The Saviour having explained this view of the kingdom to them, having taught them that the work done in the heart is really the kingdom of God within,—the pure life of Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,<sup>125</sup>—He decided to reveal to them a foretaste of the other view of the kingdom,—the kingdom in its power and in its glory. He was going to give them an idea of what the kingdom will be when it is set up in its loveliness and splendor. So He said to them:

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall<sup>127</sup> not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

45. This must certainly have appealed to them, for

<sup>122</sup>Eph. 3: 17-19. <sup>123</sup>Matt. 24: 14. <sup>124</sup>Matt. 13: 42, 43, 49, 50.

<sup>125</sup>John 15: 1-7. <sup>127</sup>Matt. 16: 28.



**Jesus Sending forth the Disciples to Teach the Kingdom**

this was the very thing that they had been hoping to hear since the Messiah had come. Doubtless from the time that these disciples had heard the first announcement of the kingdom at hand, they were longing to see the glory of this kingdom. The rabbis had told them that the prophet Daniel had spoken of just such a thing; and now their interest must have been aroused as Jesus uttered these words. For here is the scripture which states this:

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."<sup>120</sup>

46. By degrees the disciples were coming to see that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of man. Now that the Holy One had said that they were to see the kingdom and the Son of man in that kingdom, it was a most beautiful thing to them. Their hearts must have been enraptured. How the disciples must have longed for the privilege of seeing that kingdom. How they thought of the rabbis, and what these rabbis would say, if they could see it. The next few days must have been interesting and anxious days with the disciples; for He had not said that all, only some, of them would see the Son of man coming in His kingdom. After a week's patient waiting, (d) the record says:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for

<sup>120</sup>Dan. 7: 13. 14.

Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

"And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."<sup>129</sup>

By reading the accounts of Mark and Luke, we learn that the Saviour invited His disciples to go with Him to engage in a season of prayer.<sup>130</sup> While He was praying, the heavens opened, and He was given this vision. Here they saw a miniature representation of the glorious kingdom of God. Here was Jesus to represent the King in that kingdom. Here was Moses, and here was Elijah. These two men were to represent two classes of people who would be with Jesus in the kingdom when it should appear in glory. Moses died, and was taken to heaven by Jesus.<sup>131</sup> Elias (Elijah) never died. He was taken to heaven in a chariot, bodily. He was translated without having tasted death.<sup>132</sup> This was to show to the disciples that when the glorious kingdom of God would be established, it would be at the end of the world.<sup>133</sup> This was in harmony with what He had already taught them.

47. After the good news of the kingdom was preached to all the world, then the Messiah would come the second time in power and great glory.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup>Matt. 17: 1-5, 9. <sup>130</sup>Mark 9: 2-7; Luke 9: 28-35

<sup>131</sup>Deut. 34: 5; Jude 9. Compare 1 Thess. 4: 16.

<sup>132</sup>2 Kings 2: 11. <sup>133</sup>Matt. 13: 40-43. <sup>134</sup>Matt. 24: 14, 30, 31.

Those who would be alive at His appearing would be translated without tasting death, even as was Elijah the prophet.<sup>185</sup> Those who died in Him, since the beginning of the world,—those who had trusted in Him, those who had the principles of the kingdom in their heart, those who had been converted and had been born again, in every age and from every clime,—would be raised from the dead at that time.<sup>186</sup> Then the glorious King with the glorified saints, all translated and all immortalized,<sup>187</sup> would constitute the everlasting and glorious kingdom of God. This doubtless was the lesson that the Master taught these disciples at this time. They had seen a glimpse of this kingdom; but they were not to tell of it till after He was raised from the dead.

#### THE KINGDOM FIRST IN THE HEART

48. This latter idea of the Saviour must have perplexed the disciples, for the scribes and the Pharisees had taught them otherwise; and almost everything the Messiah told them seemed to conflict with the ideas of Scripture which had been taught them since their infancy. It seemed that the ideas of the word of God they had received from the rabbis were so different from what Jesus was giving them, that it often led them to ask many questions.

49. Here is what one writer says:

"As Jesus ministered to the vast multitudes that gathered

<sup>185</sup> 1 Thess. 4 : 17.    <sup>186</sup> 1 Thess. 4 : 16.    <sup>187</sup> 1 Cor. 15 : 51-54.



about Him, His disciples were in attendance, eager to do His bidding and to lighten His labor."

"While they had been with Him, the disciples had often been perplexed by the teaching of the priests and Pharisees, but they brought their perplexities to Jesus. He had set before them the truths of Scripture in contrast with tradition." — *"Desire of Ages," trade edition, pages 406, 407.*

50. After the Messiah had been with the people for about three years teaching of the kingdom, both He and His disciples, the rabbis and leaders had concluded that His word was a failure; therefore He was not the Messiah. They reasoned doubtless that He did all this kind of teaching to make for Himself a name, and to get a following.<sup>138</sup> So they decided to expose Him if possible before the people, and came to Him with this question:

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [margin, outward show]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."<sup>139</sup>

"The kingdom of God begins in the heart. Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming." — *"Desire of Ages," trade edition, page 600.*

51. But the Pharisees refused to accept this interpretation of the kingdom. This view was entirely different from what they had taught. They claimed that the kingdom would mean the overthrow of the

<sup>138</sup> John 8 : 53.

<sup>139</sup> Luke 17 : 20, 21.

Roman Empire; the setting up of a glorious kingdom; the destruction of their enemies; the preparation of a beautiful table, spread with all manner of good things; and these leaders as the most prominent ones in that kingdom. They would not accept the Messiah's views of the kingdom. They did not realize that He was the only One who could show them the true way. Poor Israel refused to accept their own Messiah, and His views of the kingdom.<sup>140</sup> They were the ones who could have understood the true Scriptural view of the Messiah and of His work, but they did not.<sup>141</sup> They also refused to accept what He taught concerning the word of God as the true meaning of the kingdom.

#### JESUS THE TRUE TEACHER

52. The time therefore came when what they did have was to be taken from them. Inasmuch as they refused to accept Him and His teachings, He was about to set them and their teachings aside. He was not to set aside the words of God which they taught. No, indeed: He was about to show them and His disciples that what He was now to do was a fulfilment of the word of God. As one writer has beautifully expressed the thought:

"In teaching these disciples, Jesus showed the importance of the Old Testament as a witness to His mission. Many professed Christians now discard the Old Testament, claim-

<sup>140</sup> John 1: 11; 8: 24.      <sup>141</sup> John 8: 19.

ing that it is no longer of any use. But such is not Christ's teaching. So highly did He value it, that at one time He said, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

"It is the voice of Christ that speaks through patriarchs and prophets, from the days of Adam even to the closing scenes of time. The Saviour is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. It is the light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty. The miracles of Christ are a proof of His divinity; but a stronger proof that He is the world's Redeemer is found in comparing the prophecies of the Old Testament with the history of the New." — *"Desire of Ages,"* trade edition, pages 956, 957.

53. The Saviour then proceeded to teach them a parable, He said:

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. . . . Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other

husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."<sup>142</sup>

54. Oh, how sad to think of it! The Messiah has come to give them the bright hope of the future life as it really is, in order that they may receive the correct view of the Messiah and the true understanding of the kingdom of God; but they refuse Him! They repudiate Him. They will have nothing to do with Him. With a sad heart and with tearful eyes,<sup>143</sup> He is obliged to tell them that their persistence in teaching erroneous views of the Scripture, their perversion of the truth of God, their misleading the people concerning the true ways of the Lord, and their refusal to accept His views of truth and His instruction of the kingdom, force Him to take away from them the key of knowledge and the teaching of the word of God. They were to be left as foolish and perverse teachers,<sup>144</sup> and were to be rejected of God.<sup>145</sup>

55. Israel, Israel, why didst thou not accept the Holy Messiah and His precious truth? Why didst thou not lay aside thine own rabbinical views of the word of God, and accept the truth as it is in the Holy Messiah? What glory would have been thine, what a blessedness would have come to thee, what an

<sup>142</sup>Matt. 21: 33-43.

<sup>143</sup>Luke 19: 41-44.

<sup>144</sup>Isa. 29: 14;

Jer. 8, 9; 1 Cor. 1: 20.

<sup>145</sup>Isa. 5: 4-6.

illumination would have been brought to thee, if thou hadst only accepted the words of the Master as the expounder of the truth!

#### LEADERS SEEK TO KILL JESUS

56. The crisis had come. Because they refused to follow Him and His way, they were refused. Now they were going to do away with Him if they could.<sup>146</sup> They were going to show Him that it was in their power to destroy Him; and they would rather maintain their own traditional ideas of the Scriptures and get rid of Him, than to accept the word of God and the salvation which He brought.<sup>147</sup> The real struggle was over tradition versus the truth of God.

57. One writer, in speaking of the council that put the Messiah to death, says:

"At this council Christ's enemies had been deeply convicted. The Holy Spirit had impressed their minds, but Satan strove to gain control of them. He urged upon their notice the grievances they had suffered on account of Christ! How little he had honored their righteousness. He presented a righteousness far greater, which all who would be children of God must possess. Taking no notice of their forms and ceremonies, He had encouraged sinners to go directly to God as a merciful Father, and make known their wants. Thus, in their opinion, He had set aside the priesthood. He had refused to acknowledge the theory of the rabbinical schools. He had exposed the evil practises of the priests, and had irreparably hurt their influence. He had injured the effect of their maxims and traditions, de-

<sup>146</sup>John 11:47-53.

<sup>147</sup>Luke 19:14.

claring that though they strictly enforced the ritual law, they made void the law of God. All this Satan now brought to their minds.

"Satan told them that in order to maintain their authority, they must put Jesus to death. This counsel they followed." — *"Desire of Ages," page 641.*

58. The history of the Jewish church during the last two thousand years carries with it a great lesson for the church to-day. It teaches us that tradition is a terrible thing. That to take our own views of the word of God rather than accept the true views of the Scripture, is to finally lose all. Should we not heed this lesson? Is there not real danger in this respect? Is there not serious cause for alarm along this line? It would seem so when we compare the Word in its simplicity with the many and varied ideas held to-day concerning the Scriptures. The fact is we are confronted with an exact parallel of that period in this present day and age.

#### PRESENT IDEA OF THE KINGDOM

59. The general sentiment held by thousands of those who profess to love the Messiah and His blessed word, is that the time is not distant when the kingdom of God in its glory and power is to be set up. There is a strong belief based on the word of God that the time is almost ripe when the kingdom of God is to come.<sup>148</sup> It is a general belief that that glorious kingdom, which the disciples hoped might be

<sup>148</sup>Rev. 14: 14, 15.

established in their day, is to be set up in our day; and there are many signs and indications portrayed in the word of God which indicate that this is really true.<sup>149</sup>

60. It would seem from the study of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, that the time is at hand when the glory of God is to be revealed.<sup>150</sup> People of many sects and creeds believe this. The sentiment is much to-day as it was just prior to the first advent of the Messiah, when there was a general expectation that something was to come to pass.<sup>151</sup> The people seem to feel that the time for the fulness of the gospel to be realized is here, and the fruition of the hope of the children of God is to become a fact.<sup>152</sup>

61. How sad, however, it is to think of the many and various opinions which are held in regard to this subject! How many rabbis and sages there are to-day who, like the leaders of old, have the program all arranged, and have things mapped out as they think they ought to be. (X)† These wise men teach the people that the plan is all right, and that what they teach will surely come to pass. It is true that there are some who will even refer to the Scriptures to show that the plan or program is in harmony with the word of God, as did the sages of old. When we come to investigate the plan, we find that it is much

<sup>149</sup>Matt. 24 : 29-35.

<sup>150</sup>Matt. 16 : 27.

<sup>151</sup>Luke 3 : 15.

<sup>152</sup>Titus 2 : 11-13.

the same scheme as that of the rabbis of old,—the Scriptures are made to fit the plan.<sup>152</sup>

62. The author of one such plan has well said:

"The fact that at first glance a theory appears reasonable should not lead us hastily to accept it, and to attempt to twist the Bible into harmony with it." — *Series I, "Plan of the Ages," page 163, edition 1911.*

These are true words, and if they were only followed, there would be more adapting men's plans to the word of God than trying to make the word of God adapt itself to human plans.

#### THE MILLENNIAL AGE

63. While there are many diverse views on this important subject of the kingdom to-day,—and the theme is one which is not only important to the church of Christ but is really vital,<sup>154</sup>—the consensus of opinion seems to focus on the idea that we are about to enter into the millennium. It is generally regarded that the glory which God is to reveal is to be connected with a definite period, known as the Millennial Age; and this Millennial Age is to bring to pass all that the heart could wish.

64. Before considering any view or theory of this millennium as held by many, we desire to present a few passages from the word of God, without any comment.<sup>155</sup> It is a theme which the people should know, even as the Jewish church needed to understand

<sup>152</sup>Matt. 15: 3, 8, 9.

<sup>154</sup>Matt. 13: 17.

<sup>155</sup>Luke 10: 26.



the kingdom of God as it was correctly taught in the light of the truth of the Scriptures.

65. The word millennium is not a Scriptural word. The word itself is not to be found in the Bible. It is a contracted Latin word, derived from two words, *mille*, *annus*. These two words mean a thousand years. (g) The words "thousand years" are found in the whole Bible ten times, and here they are:

"For a *thousand years* in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."<sup>156</sup>

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a *thousand years*, and a *thousand years* as one day."<sup>157</sup>

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a *thousand years*,

"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the *thousand years* should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a *thousand years*.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the *thousand years* were finished. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>156</sup>Ps. 90:4.

<sup>157</sup>2 Pet. 3:8.

Mille  
1000

Anni  
Years

# THE MILLENNIUM

1st  
R  
E  
S  
U  
R  
R  
E  
C

DURING 1000 YEARS

Depopulation of the Earth  
Dead Scattered on Earth's Surface  
Chaotic Condition of Earth  
Binding of Satan

2nd  
R  
E  
S  
U  
R  
R  
E  
C  
E

T I O N	Reign of the Righteous		T I O N	R N
	Righteous Judging			
	SECOND COMING OF CHRIST	WICKED DEAD RAISED	I	
	RESURRECTION OF RIGHTEOUS DEAD	DESCENT OF NEW JERUSALEM	T	
	TRANSLATION OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING	ANNIHILATION OF WICKED	Y	
	DESTRUCTION OF ALL THE WICKED LIVING	PURIFICATION OF THE EARTH		

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a *thousand years*."

"And when the *thousand years* are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."<sup>120</sup>

"Yea, though he live a *thousand years* twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?"<sup>121</sup>

66. This, we believe, comprehends all the texts in the entire Bible where the words are found which mean a millennium. By the plain, simple reading of these texts, it will be noted that the Scriptures do not speak of a glorious period for everybody, and a good time coming for the world. What do they teach? The first two and the last verses quoted have nothing to do with the subject, as far as any millennial view is concerned. The other six verses as recorded in Revelation, chapter 20, are the ones which are generally referred to as teaching the good time which is so soon to be at hand. What does the word of God say? How does the Bible read?

### THREE CLASSES OF MILLENNIALISTS

67. The religious world is divided into three great classes on this question of the millennium, as follows: The Millennial Dawnists; the Pre-Millennialists; the Post-Millennialists. The Millennial Dawnist believes that the millennium is to begin in the year 1914. (A) At that time all human society is to have an upheaval,

<sup>120</sup>Rev. 20: 1-7.

<sup>121</sup>Eccl. 6: 6.

and a special class, a select few, a chosen company, is to be spirited away, and then will begin a peculiar time and strange experience. After that, there will be given to all the people who have ever lived in this world, from Adam down, possibly including the devil, another chance, called a "second probation." During this thousand years, this select company, this particular chosen few, are to have the running of things in this world much their own way, except that the Saviour is to be with them, and only then in a spiritualistic sense. We shall have occasion to refer to this view later.

68. The Pre-Millennialist believes that there is to be a thousand years of good time somewhere on this earth. During this season, the people of God will have a glorious era, but the wicked will have a hard time. This class believes that the millennium, or the thousand years, will be ushered in before the return of the Lord.

69. The Post-Millennialist is one who believes that the Lord Jesus will come again with power and great glory, and will gather His people to Himself.<sup>160</sup> After the Lord returns, then will begin the thousand years, the millennium. Which is the Biblical view? Shall we, like the rabbis and Pharisees of old, hold to a preconceived idea and a personal opinion? Shall we make the program as we think it ought to be, and

<sup>160</sup>John 14: 1-3.

<sup>161</sup>2 Pet. 3: 16.

then twist the Scriptures to conform to this ideal? Shall we even wrest<sup>181</sup> some scriptures, and then claim that the idea we have is easily sustained by the word of God? Shall we hold to a theory that may appear nice and reasonable, even clear, scientific, and logical, then make the Bible fit into such a theory? To answer the question, we can do no better than apply the suggestion of the author of the "Plan of the Ages:"

"The fact that at first glance a theory appears reasonable should not lead us to hastily accept it, and to attempt to twist the Bible into harmony with it."

70. The part of the word of God which tells of this particular thousand years, the millennium, is confined to the book of Revelation. Whether it is to be in the year 1914, whether it is to take place before the Saviour comes, or whether it is to begin after He comes, must be made clear to us in these scriptures. Do these scriptures tell us when this period begins?

#### FOURTEEN POINTS ON THE MILLENNIUM

71. We find the following things stated in the first seven verses of this twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| First,  | An angel comes down from heaven with a key in his hand. Verse 1. |
| Second, | This angel binds the devil for a thousand years. Verse 2.        |
| Third,  | The devil is cast into the bottomless pit. Verse 3.              |

- Fourth, The devil is in this pit a thousand years.  
Verse 3.
- Fifth, The devil has no power to deceive any one  
during this time. Verse 3.
- Sixth, After the thousand years, the devil must be  
loosed a little while. Verse 3.
- Seventh, John saw the martyrs and the victors, sit-  
ting in judgment. Verse 4.
- Eighth, These righteous reign with Christ a thou-  
sand years. Verse 4.
- Ninth, All the rest of the people but these right-  
eous are dead, and do not live again  
for a thousand years. Verse 5.
- Tenth, The first resurrection. Verse 5.
- Eleventh, Those who have part in the first resur-  
rection are called blessed and holy.  
Verse 6.
- Twelfth, The second death hath no power on these.  
Verse 6.
- Thirteenth, They are priests and reign a thousand  
years. Verse 6.
- Fourteenth, The devil is loosed after the thousand  
years. Verse 7.

72. There are several statements in these verses which are very clear: One, There is a class of people who reign with Christ a thousand years. Two, There are none other people alive during this thousand years but those who reign with Christ. Three, All the people who do not live at this time, do not live again

till after the thousand years are finished. Four, Those who do not live during this thousand years have part in the second death. With these facts before us, it is very clear that we may learn other things from these scriptures:

#### THE MILLENNIUM AND THE RESURRECTION

73. a. The thousand years, or the millennium, is marked by the resurrection of the righteous. Verse 5. That this is true, is evident from the following: The text plainly says that

"This is the first resurrection."

The next verse says:

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. . . . They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

So it is clear that those who reign with Christ are those who have part in the first resurrection. This must be plain and simple to all who will only read the texts. Then the *first resurrection* marks the beginning of the millennium.(i)

74. It seems obvious from the above that there must be a second resurrection at the end of the thousand years; for the Scripture plainly says that those who are then dead live not again till after the thousand years are finished. The Scripture also says that those who are dead must die again, because those who reign during the thousand years do not have any part in the second death. Verse 6. The dead, there-



fore, in order to die again, must be raised from the dead. But the word of God says that they stay dead at this time for a thousand years. Therefore:

75. b. The millennium or thousand years ends with the second resurrection. So the millennial period, as found in this book of Revelation, is bounded by a resurrection,—the first resurrection at the beginning of the millennium, and the second resurrection at the end of that period.

76. The question, however, may be raised, Does the Bible teach that there are to be two resurrections, a resurrection for the righteous, and a resurrection for the wicked? How do we know but that all the dead will come forth from their graves at the same time?<sup>162</sup> Let us hear the word of God, whether it says anything in answer to this question:

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a *resurrection* of the dead, *both of the just and unjust.*”<sup>163</sup>

77. How do we know though that the unjust and the just do not receive their recompense at the same time?—Because the Messiah says so, in the following words:

“And thou shalt be blessed; for they can not recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”<sup>164</sup>

<sup>162</sup>John 5: 28, 29.

<sup>163</sup>Acts 24: 14, 15.

<sup>164</sup>Luke 14: 14.

This verse clearly shows that the just will arise first and receive their reward before the unjust awaken. To make the thought still more emphatic, let us refer again to the verse found in Revelation:

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."<sup>188</sup>

78. Putting this scripture with that verse referred to in Luke, spoken by the Master, we find the Saviour and John in perfect accord. John says that those who have part in the *first resurrection* are blessed and holy. Jesus says that the righteous will be blessed. When? — At the resurrection of the just. It therefore seems perfectly clear and harmonious from the word of God that the first resurrection is for the righteous only, and this occurs at the beginning of the thousand years.

79. That we may be sure this is the true teaching of the word of God on this point, let us read another verse:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first*."<sup>189</sup>

80. This certainly is undisputed evidence that only the children of God, the righteous, have part in the first resurrection; the wicked do not have any resurrection till the close of the thousand years. It must be evident, then, that the beginning of the thousand years, or the beginning of the millennium, is indicated by the *first resurrection*, the resurrection of the righteous. (j)

<sup>188</sup>Rev. 20: 6.

<sup>189</sup>1 Thess. 4: 16.

## THE FIRST RESURRECTION WHEN THE LORD COMES

81. Now the question naturally arises, When does the first resurrection take place? Can we find in the word of God when this is to happen? If we can find in the word of God when this is to happen; if we can find when the first resurrection occurs, we certainly shall have located the beginning of the millennium by the harmonious comparison of the word of God,<sup>167</sup> without having any theory to advocate, and without trying to make the Scriptures fit the theory.

82. Here is the word of Jehovah on this point:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."<sup>168</sup>

That which brings the first resurrection is the personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>169</sup> At the coming of the Lord Himself from heaven with the clouds, He awakens the righteous dead from their graves.<sup>170</sup> The millennium therefore begins with the *personal appearing of our Lord.* (k) There can therefore be no millennium prior to the return of the Lord, from a Scriptural standpoint. This certainly is clear.

83. All the dead in Christ arise at the appearing of our Lord. This is in direct harmony with what had been written hundreds of years before by the prophets of God:

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord

<sup>167</sup>1 Cor. 2:13.

<sup>168</sup>1 Thess. 4:16.

<sup>169</sup>Titus 2:13.

<sup>170</sup>Hosea 13:14.



**The Transfiguration of Christ**

God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."<sup>171</sup>

84. At the same time that the Lord raises the righteous, the following also takes place:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the *air*: and so shall we<sup>172</sup> ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

85. We see, then, according to the divine word, that at the coming of the Lord, all the dead in Christ are raised from their graves; all the righteous living who have not died are caught up together with them in the *air* to meet the Lord. Then, at that time, the following takes place:

"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"<sup>173</sup>

86. At the personal coming of our dear Lord and Saviour, the beginning of the millennium, all the dead

<sup>171</sup>Isa. 25: 8, 9.

<sup>172</sup>1 Thess. 4: 17.

<sup>173</sup>1 Cor. 15: 51-54.

in Christ who have been raised from the tomb, and all the righteous living who have never tasted death, are changed from mortal to immortal, from corruption to incorruption; and, in a flash, in an instant, the work is done. Death is then swallowed up in victory for the righteous. Their troubles and their sorrows are forever over.<sup>174</sup> Thank God, O church of Christ, for such a precious, precious promise.<sup>175</sup>

87. It will be observed, too, that all who have been translated at this time do not remain here on the earth. The Bible says that they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air.<sup>176</sup> Then it is evident that at the beginning of the millennium, at the personal appearing of our Lord, the Lord Jesus does not even come direct to the earth; that is, He remains in the air, and the children of God are caught up to meet Him. The righteous, therefore, are caught up from this earth, and are taken away from this mundane sphere at the beginning of the millennium. Therefore at the beginning of the thousand years there is not one single righteous person left on this earth. "Thus saith the Lord." (1)

#### ONLY TWO CLASSES

88. We now come to another question, Who are left on the earth at the coming of the Lord? If the righteous are caught up and taken out of this world, who are left to remain on this earth during this thousand years? Let the word of God answer:

<sup>174</sup> Rev. 21: 4.

<sup>175</sup> 2 Pet. 1: 4.

<sup>176</sup> 1 Thes. 4: 17.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. . . . So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. *Let both grow together until the harvest.*"<sup>177</sup>

"He [Jesus] answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; *the harvest is the end of the world*; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be *in the end of this world.*"<sup>178</sup>

89. The Holy Messiah tells us that when He shall appear the second time, there will be but two classes, the wheat and the tares; and both these will grow together till the end of the world. Then there are only two kinds of people on the earth when the Lord comes.<sup>179</sup> There is no third class, or fourth class, or fifth class, or middle class. This same truth is taught in many other passages in the Bible:

"I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked."<sup>180</sup>

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that

<sup>177</sup>Matt. 13: 24-30.

<sup>178</sup>Matt. 13: 37-40.

<sup>179</sup>Heb. 9: 28.

<sup>180</sup>Eccl. 3: 17.

was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world."<sup>181</sup>

#### THE WICKED DIE AT CHRIST'S COMING

90. Then we ask, What will become of all the wicked at the end of the world, when the Lord comes? We have already noticed several texts which teach that they will be burned. But it might be said that these things were taught only in a parable. Let us therefore read another scripture:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints."<sup>182</sup>

"And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."<sup>183</sup>

91. At the return of our Lord, at the beginning of the millennium, at the first resurrection, all the wicked who are alive on the earth will be destroyed by the brightness of the glory of the Son of God, when He comes with all His angels.<sup>184</sup> There is therefore not a man, woman, or child alive on the earth at the beginning of the millennium. "Thus saith the Lord." See chart on pages 274, 275. (m)

<sup>181</sup>Matt. 13: 47-49.

<sup>182</sup>2 Thess. 1: 7-9.

<sup>183</sup>2 Thess. 2: 8.

<sup>184</sup>Matt. 25: 31.



92. Then what happens on this earth during the millennial period? It is evident from the word of God that there can be very little carried forward in this earth during that period. What can be going on during this time on this planet? Can we ascertain? From our study of the Bible thus far, we have found that the earth is depopulated. Since there is not one living person here at the beginning of the millennial period, with the rest of the dead not living again till after the thousand years are finished, this earth must be depopulated. There is, however, another scripture which will help make this point very clear:

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."<sup>185</sup>

93. What a vivid picture this is of the coming of the Lord and of the destruction which takes place at that time. As the Saviour comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, attended by all His holy angels, there are mighty earthquakes all over the world, and all the nations are terribly shaken. They are all affected by the disaster, and the earth is depopulated for one thousand years.<sup>186</sup> The dead bodies of the wicked are scattered on every part of the earth's surface. There is no one here to bury

<sup>185</sup>Jer. 25: 32, 33.

<sup>186</sup>Rev. 6: 14-17.

them, nor to gather them, nor to lament them. They lie here for a thousand years as refuse. (π)

#### THE EARTH IN A CHAOTIC STATE

Another graphic description of the earth at that time is given by the prophet:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end."<sup>187</sup>

94. How true is this picture, as we look at it in the light of the Word during the millennial period. The earth has returned to its chaotic state; there is no light; the earth is in its original unformed state; all the cities lie waste.<sup>188</sup> Where else can this scripture apply? The world has never been in this state since its creation. There have been times when certain parts of the earth have been destroyed. It is true that there have been volcanic eruptions in certain sections.<sup>189</sup> It is also true that there have been places where many people have been destroyed. It has never been true since the creation of the world that all the world has been desolate with no man upon it, with the light excluded from it, with the whole land returned to its

<sup>187</sup>Jer. 4: 23-27.

<sup>188</sup>Rev. 16: 18-20.

<sup>189</sup>Rev. 6: 12.

chaotic state. It can not be true after the thousand years; for the Lord says that He will create a new heaven and a new earth.<sup>190</sup> There can therefore be but one place where the scripture belongs; and that is, to the state of this earth during the thousand years.

95. The earth has therefore been returned to its state as it was before the Lord formed it. We read in Genesis, chapter 1, the following:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."<sup>191</sup>

The very same words found in the Hebrew in this second verse of Genesis 1, are the words used in Jeremiah 4: 23. Without form and void, in the Hebrew are, *To-hu Va-vohu*. This last word, *Vo-hu*, literally means, empty, emptiness, a great abyss without any bottom to it. A great waste, bottomless. This then is the condition of the earth during the thousand years. (o)

96. We read, however, that the devil is cast into a bottomless pit, and is chained during this thousand years.<sup>192</sup> How beautifully the Lord gives His word, and how clear and harmonious He makes it. We need no theories; we need not twist the Bible to fit the theories. What has been the business of the devil during the last six thousand years in this world? — It has been to deceive and to lure away souls from

<sup>190</sup>Isa. 65: 17; 66: 22; Rev. 21: 1; 2 Pet. 3: 13. <sup>191</sup>Gen. 1: 1, 2.

<sup>192</sup>Rev. 20: 1, 2.

God.<sup>193</sup> He has been very busy deceiving mankind into all kinds of sin. He brought woe, misery, sorrow, degradation, and sin upon the human race, and upon the world.<sup>194</sup> From the day he began his work till the day the millennium begins he has kept himself extremely busy. He has taken very little time for anything but to destroy souls and to defame the character of God.<sup>195</sup> He has never been idle. He has made various promises to the children of men, especially assuring them that, if they would only serve him and accept the kingdoms of this world and their glory, he would make them happy, and they would have a most wonderful future. The majority of the human race believed. When the time came for the followers of the devil to receive their wages, they were paid with death.

#### THE DEVIL BOUND BY A CHAIN

97. But at the beginning of the millennium, all the



**The Binding of Satan**

<sup>193</sup>Rev. 12: 9.

<sup>194</sup>Rom. 8: 21, 22.

<sup>195</sup>Job 1: 6-12; 2: 1-7; Rev. 12: 10.

wicked were destroyed.<sup>196</sup> All the righteous were taken away from this world. The devil's capital and barter was human souls. This was his trade and the goods wherewith he bought and sold. Now where are they? Surely there is a panic. He has met a Waterloo; it is a terrible defeat. He is tied; he is bound. The chain with which he is bound is a strong one indeed. There is a chain, a literal one, that a person might be tied with. If he has the power to break it, or if he can secure some other person to assist him in removing the chain, he can free himself. There is another kind of chain with which people are sometimes bound, from which they find no human can release them. A chain of circumstances may be of that character that neither the individual nor any one else can help him. It is this kind of chain with which the devil is bound. The chain of circumstances is so strong and so powerful, that there is no possible way of his getting loosed from it. There are now no human souls to tempt; there is no one to harass and to molest. Here, alone, with his millions of demons, in the great abyss of this earth,—this earth returned to its original chaotic state,—the devil has the opportunity for one thousand years of thinking of the great good that has come to him and the millions who have joined him in rebellion against God. He will have the chance to ponder how much he has benefited the earth by his rebellion and disobedience against

<sup>196</sup>Rom. 6: 23.

God. He will have ample time for meditation, and his chain holds him right here in this great abyss. (p)

98. But what has become of the righteous? Where are they? We found that they met the Lord in the air, and forever were they to be with Him. Where are they bound for? Let us hear the words of the Saviour:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and *receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*"<sup>197</sup>

This was the Master's promise to His disciples before He left the earth. His desire was that His disciples should see the glory which He had with His Father before the world was.<sup>198</sup> His prayer to His Father was that He wished His disciples to be with Him, that they might behold His glory.<sup>199</sup>

99. When He went away, He went to His Father. He went to heaven, and has been there with the Lord ever since.<sup>200</sup> To fulfil this promise to the disciples, He comes with all His glory and power, and with all the holy angels to receive His true followers, that He may take them to those mansions which He has prepared for them. He takes them into the presence of His Father, and there shows His Father His own redeemed saints, those whom He has purchased with

<sup>197</sup>John 14: 1-3.

<sup>198</sup>John 17: 24.

<sup>199</sup>John 17: 3.

<sup>200</sup>Rev. 3: 21.

His own precious blood.<sup>201</sup> Then He is satisfied when He sees the travail of His soul.<sup>202</sup>

#### THE RIGHTEOUS SEE GOD AND JUDGE THE WICKED

100. Then it is that the children of God shall see the Father's face,<sup>203</sup> and they shall be personally introduced by the Lord Jesus to the God of heaven, to the Lord of all.<sup>204</sup> Then it is that the Master takes His children to Himself; and with Him, the blessed Redeemer, they live and reign in heaven for a thousand years.<sup>205</sup> What a beautiful and blessed vision that will be. Reader, let us all be among that number when it takes place. It will be worth all the effort to spend the millennium in that manner. We can not afford to wait and to procrastinate. We can not afford to be counted among the number who are expecting another opportunity at some later time. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." It is to-day that we are to hear His voice and not to harden our hearts.<sup>206</sup>

101. But what are the righteous doing while they reign? Ah, He has promised the children of God that with Him they should judge the world. Here is what is written:

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not

<sup>201</sup>Acts 20:28.      <sup>202</sup>Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2.      <sup>203</sup>Rev. 22:4.

<sup>204</sup>Isa. 26:2; Rev. 22:14.

<sup>205</sup>Rev. 20:4.

<sup>206</sup>Ps. 95:7, 8; 2 Cor. 6:2.

that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."<sup>207</sup>

This is in harmony with what we read in Revelation, chapter 20.<sup>208</sup> The word of God is always harmonious. There is no need of building up a theory, and twisting the Bible to fit that theory. During the thousand years the righteous are, cojointly with the Lord Jesus, judging the wicked, passing judgment upon them, which is to be executed at the close of the millennium.

102. When the thousand years shall end, as we have previously seen, the devil is to be loosed just for a season.<sup>209</sup> Why is he loosed? We found in this and in other scriptures that at the close of the millennium the wicked dead are to be raised. Then it is that the devil, for a little time, has another opportunity of handling human souls. And it is here that he makes his last stand, and attempts his last battle. He sees the New Jerusalem which has descended from God out of heaven, this beautiful camp of the saints, this beloved city.<sup>210</sup> He sees the glories that are therein;<sup>211</sup> he not only realizes *that* he is lost but *what* he has lost. He sees the myriads of men and women who are raised from the dead. All the wicked of

<sup>207</sup> 1 Cor. 6: 3, 4; 4: 5.      <sup>208</sup> Rev. 20: 4.      <sup>209</sup> Rev. 20: 7.

<sup>210</sup> Rev. 20: 9.      <sup>211</sup> 1 Cor. 2: 9.



earth are there. The warriors, the statesmen, the strong of earth, who in days gone by have done his bidding, are there.<sup>212</sup> They come up from the dead as they went down into death. He has inspired many of these military genii in times of old, and they have done his bidding. He seeks to inspire them once more. Here are all the millions; there in the city are but a few. Capture that city, and destroy those saints, this seems to be the slogan.

103. The last and final deception takes place. He deceives them into believing that that victory is possible. The vast multitude go up on the breadth of the earth to compass the camp of the saints, the beloved city of God. As they approach it, the fire of God comes down from heaven and devours the wicked.<sup>213</sup> The judgment, which the righteous, with the blessed Christ during the millennium, have meted out to the wicked, is now being passed upon them, and they are receiving the reward for the deeds done in the body.<sup>214</sup> They now receive the full measure of their wages, *death*.<sup>215</sup> The wicked are destroyed; the evil angels are destroyed. Satan is destroyed. All that is bad and evil is destroyed. It is destroyed, both root and branch. The whole earth is cleansed from sin and uncleanness.<sup>216</sup>

#### THE GLORIES FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD

104. Then it is that the righteous shall shine forth

<sup>212</sup>Rev. 20: 8.      <sup>213</sup>Rev. 20: 9.      <sup>214</sup>Rom. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

<sup>215</sup>Rom. 6: 23.      <sup>216</sup>Matt. 25: 41; Mal. 4: 1-3.

as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;<sup>217</sup> then they shall dwell with Him in the earth made new. Then it is that the blessed Christ creates a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Then it is that this earth is to be the final abode of the saints. Then it is that there shall not come into this earth anything that shall defile or shall destroy. Then it is that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, even as the waters cover the sea.

105. Where then, according to the Scripture, is there any place for a second probation in the millennium? Where then, according to Scripture, is there a place for a millennium of good time before the return of the Lord? Where then is there any hope for the child of God, save in the present ever-blessed gospel of the Son of God, *before* the Lord shall return? Where then, is there any hope aside from the hope set forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is now given in His blessed word?

106. We have seen how the leaders of the Jewish church led away the people at the time of the first advent, while promising them something that was not in harmony with the word of God. When the Master came, they were not prepared to receive Him, because of these erroneous views of Scripture. They lost all then. They looked for something different from what He brought to them.

<sup>217</sup>Matt. 13: 43.

107. Shall not we, then, living in these latter times, take heed to the things which we find in the word of God?<sup>218</sup> Let us not follow in the path which Israel traveled, that wrong path, and finally lose all. Let us not build a theory, and seek to twist the Bible to fit into that theory. What a great and glorious future awaits the church of God in this age. Let us prepare for the glorious time now; for now is the accepted time. Let us not give heed to theories and stories which delay for some future period. This is the day of God for the church. This is the time to give heed to the word of God.

108. The blessed Master is now sending the invitation to all men, to come to Him.<sup>219</sup>(q) He is not merely calling a select class; He is not making any favorites. He loves all, and He died for all.<sup>220</sup> He is now giving to all mankind everywhere an opportunity to prepare to meet Him in peace and glory. Church of the living God, let us heed well the lessons of old, and benefit greatly in this our time of visitation. The door is now open to both Jew and Gentile; He is Lord of all.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>218</sup>Heb. 4: 1; 2: 1. <sup>219</sup>Rev. 14: 6-12; Isa. 55: 1; Rev. 22: 17.

<sup>220</sup>Heb. 2: 9.

<sup>221</sup>Rev. 5: 11-13.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## CHAPTER IX

## Paragraph 9

a. The following will give the reader a good idea of the sentiment among the leaders of Israel with regard to the Jews' being the especially favored of God:

"Beloved are Israel, for they were called the children of the All-present. It was by a special love that it was made known to them that they were called the children of the All-present, as it is written, 'Ye are children unto the Lord your God.' Deut. 14:1. Beloved are Israel, for unto them was given the desirable instrument. It was by a special love that it was made known to them that this desirable instrument was theirs, through which the world was created, for it is said, 'For I give you good doctrine forsake ye not my law.' Prov. 4:2." — "*Perka Avoth*," chapter 3.

## Paragraph 11

b. To this day the Jews pray everywhere that the Lord will build up Jerusalem, and bring the Messiah. Especially at the time of the sacred feasts, they usually end their prayers with the words: "May we in the year to come be in Jerusalem."

## Paragraph 32

c. It should be remembered that one of the fundamental teachings of the rabbis was the doctrine of merit. They believed and they taught that they received favors or punishments according to their merits or lack of them. Here are some illustrations of this teaching as found in the Talmud:

"Every one of the children of man has merits and sins. If his merits exceed his sins, he is righteous. If his sins exceed his merits, he is wicked. If they be half and half, he is a middling or intermediate person." — "*Hilchoth T-shuvah*."

"And this weighing is made, not with respect to the number of the merits and the sins, but according to their greatness. There is a merit which may outweigh many sins, as it is said, 'Because that in him is found some good thing.' (1 Kings 14:13) And there are sins, which may outweigh many merits, for it is said: 'One sinner destroyeth much good.' (Eccl. 9:8.) — *Ibid.*

"If a man sin one sin, he gives the preponderance for himself and for all the world to the scale of guilt, and causes destruction. But if he perform one commandment, he gives the preponderance both for himself and all the world to the scale of merit, and causes salvation and deliverance to himself and them, as it is said, 'The righteous is the foundation of the world' (Prov. 10:25), which means that righteousness gives the world a preponderance in the scale of merit and delivers it." — *Ibid.*

#### Paragraph 46

d. The record in Matthew 17:1, says:

"After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart."

But in Luke 9:28, it is written:

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went into a mountain to pray."

Now there is no disagreement between these two statements. This way of speaking is quite customary among the Jewish people to this very day. They are apt to speak of a week as "eight days," it is a Jewish expression. So in the New Testament where the words, eight days, are used, they are understood to mean a week. It should be remembered that the writers of the New Testament being Jews, and writing to Jews, are using expressions very familiar to the people to whom they are writing.

#### Paragraph 55

e. Any one familiar with the writings of the Talmud during the past two thousand years will appreciate the

truth of the statement, that since the key of knowledge was taken away from the people by their refusing the Holy Messiah, the prominent lights of the Jews have been perverse teachers and foolish leaders. One prominent Jewish writer, the late H. Hurwitz, speaking along this line, says:

"The Talmud contains many things which every enlightened Jew must sincerely wish had either never appeared there, or had, at least, long ago been expunged from its pages. Some of these stories are objectionable *per se*, others are, indeed, susceptible of explanations, but without them are calculated to produce false and erroneous impressions.

"(Of the former description are all those extravagances relating to the extent of Paradise, the dimensions of Gehinom, the size of Leviathan, and the Shor Abor (the great ox), the freaks of Ashmadai, etc., etc., — idle tales, borrowed most probably from the Parthians and Arabians, to whom the Jews were subject before the promulgation of the Talmud. These absurdities are as foreign to genuine religion as they are repugnant to common sense." — *"The Talmud, What it is,"* by Rev. Bernard Pick.

This can not be said of the men who wrote the Bible nor of the Jewish people when they followed strictly the word of God. Everything in the Bible is in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Spirit; it was when the Messiah was rejected that the teachings of the Scriptures from any point of view they might regard them, became absurd and foolish. Here is a sample of teaching:

"For the bleeding of the nose, let a man be brought who is a priest, and whose name is Levi, and let him write the word *Levi* backwards. If this can not be done, get a layman, and let him write the following words backwards: '*Ana pipi shila bar Sumki*;' or let him write these words: '*Taam dili bemi Keseph, taam li bemi paggar*.' Or let him take a root of grass, and the cord of an old bed, and paper and saffron and the red part of the inside of a palm-tree, and let him burn them together, and let him take

some wool and twist two threads, and let him dip them in vinegar, and then roll them in the ashes, and put them into his *ose*." — "*Gittin*."

#### Paragraph 61

f. Speaking of his views of the coming kingdom, the author of "*The Plan of the Ages*" says:

"And be it known that no other system of theology even claims, or has ever attempted, to harmonize in itself *every* statement in the Bible; yet nothing short of this can we claim for these views." — *Vol. 1, page 348*.

He fixes matters just as he wishes them. When chronology is not in harmony with the theory advocated, then Bible chronology has to be doctored. See *Vol. 2, pages 53, 67*. When the Scripture itself speaks in a manner not conducive to the ideas of the writer, the Scripture even has to be doctored.—either added to, or taken from. See *Vol. I, pages 81, 107*. We believe that the author of those volumes would have done well had he followed his admonition:

"How much more becoming to come humbly to God's word and '*ask*' concerning things to come, than to '*command*' or to assert that he must carry out our ideas." — "*Plan of the Ages*," *Vol. 1, page 191*.

#### Paragraph 65

g. The words, *mille annus*, may be found in any of the unabridged dictionaries. However, the reader should note that the authors of the various dictionaries give a theological meaning to the word. While we believe that dictionaries are very useful for etymology; the Bible is the book for theology. It is much better for one to read for himself the word of God, than simply to learn what others may have to say concerning the Word.

#### Paragraph 67

h. This suggestion of the millennium to begin in the

year 1914, originated with the author of "The Plan of the Ages," as shown from the work itself:

"Remember that the *forty years'* Jewish harvest ended October, A. D. 69, and was followed by the complete overthrow of that nation; and that likewise the overthrow of 'Christendom,' so-called, *must* be expected to immediately follow." — "*Plan of the Ages.*" Vol. 1, page 254.

According to that author's idea, this would make the real beginning of the millennium take place forty years earlier. This we find is exactly the position taken.

"So, then, if the great Jubilee were to be only a year like its type, it would have commenced October, A. D. 1874 the end of 2499 years, and would have ended October A. D. 1875. But this is not the type but the reality: it was not a Jubilee year, but the antitypical Thousand year of Restitution of all things, which commenced October A. D. 1874." — *Ibid.*, page 187.

Therefore the author of Millennial Dawn teaches that Christ came the second time in the year 1874. This is what he says on this point:

"The fall of A. D. 1874, where the Jubilee cycles point out that our *Lord was due to be present.*" — *Ibid.*, page 235.

Again: "And the harvest of this age began with the presence of our Lord at the beginning of earth's Great Jubilee, in 1874, as shown in chapter 6." — *Ibid.*, page 234.

Again: "Surely all who will consider the matter carefully must acknowledge . . . that our Lord is now present (a spirit being, and hence invisible)." — *Ibid.*, page 237.

#### Paragraph 73

i. In order to have the world begin its second probation, the author of the Millennial Dawn seeks to do away with Rev. 20:5. He claims that this text is not found in the original Greek. But it has been proved time and again that it is found in the original text, and not one eminent Greek scholar of the New Testament, questions the integrity of



the statement. The next verse proves that the fifth verse is true; for the statement of the last part of the fifth verse is practically repeated in the sixth verse. Inasmuch as this fifth verse is so strong against the idea of Millennial Dawnism, in harmony with his other teachings along these lines, the thing he has to do is to repudiate the scripture. So he says:

"It is our duty to repudiate such additions as soon as their spurious character is established." — *Vol. 1, page 288.*

However, the gentleman is not at all discouraged in his task. He then proceeds to do away with the literal resurrection. He says:

"The word resurrection signifies raising up. As related to man, it signifies raising up man to that condition from which he fell, to full perfection of manhood—the thing lost through Adam. The perfection from which our race fell is the perfection to which they will *gradually rise*, during the millennial age of *restitution or resurrection (raising up)*. . . . The process of resurrection *will be a gradual one.*" — *Ibid, page 289.*

This is perversion of Scripture in a horrible manner. How contrary to all the truth of the word of God. Surely such teaching is opposed to sound doctrine.

#### Paragraph 80

j. It is evident from the writings of Millennial Dawn that the author does not believe in a literal resurrection of the body. While he speaks of a resurrection as well as of many other things in connection with the coming of the Lord, it is evident that he does not believe in the raising of the real body: for of Christ's body, he says:

"Our Lord's human body, was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples. . . . We know nothing about what became of it. . . . Whether it was dissolved into gases

or whether it is still preserved somewhere, . . . no one knows." — *Ibid*, page 120.

Is this statement not blasphemy? Does not the Bible plainly say that Christ's body was raised from the tomb? Was it not the same Christ that went into the tomb who came forth from the tomb? Hear what Jesus said:

"And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my *hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.* And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his *hands and his feet.*" Luke 24:38-40.

Do we not know what became of it? Was it dissolved into gases? Did not the Lord Jesus assure them that He was the same Christ as He was before He was crucified? Did He not have the same hands? Were not His feet the same? If they were not, why should He ask the disciples to feel His hands and His feet? Should such teaching as is presented in those books, "Plan of the Ages," pass for Christian teaching? Do they not actually blaspheme that Holy Name and Holy Life? Think of it, dear reader, our Lord's body turned into gases!

Here is another statement along the same line from the same author. He says:

"Many Christians have the idea that our Lord's glorious spiritual body is the very same body that was crucified and laid away in Joseph's tomb. They expect, when they see the Lord in glory, to identify him by the scars he received on Calvary. *This is a great mistake.*" — *Ibid*, pages 128, 129.

What was the matter with doubting Thomas after the resurrection? He said:

"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

"Then said he [Jesus] to Thomas, *Reach hither thy*

*finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither t'hy hand, and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."* John 20:25-28.

Are Christians not correct, then, in believing that the body in which the Saviour rose from the tomb was the same body with which He went into the grave? Was not this encounter with Thomas one of the incidents in Christ's experience after the resurrection to help the children of God from being led away by just such erroneous teaching as is advocated in Millennial Dawnism? Is "*this a great mistake*" to believe that we shall know the blessed Christ when He appears, by the prints of the nails in His hands? Hear what the prophet says:

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have *graven thee upon the palms of my hands.*" Isa. 49:15, 16.

"And his brightness was as the light; he had bright beams out of his side: and there was the hiding of his power." Hab. 3:4, margin.

Yes, thank God, it is the nail-prints in His hands, and the spear thrust in His side, that will make His glory more glorious. It will be by these things that we shall know Him to be the same Jesus who was here and who was crucified for our sins. If He did not have these marks in His body at His coming, how should we know whether it were the same Jesus or some other being? We are told in the Scripture that Satan is to transform himself into an angel of light, and this he does to deceive the people. 2 Cor. 11:14. Is the author of those "studies" preparing the way for the people to be deceived? It is not a mistake for Christians to expect to see those marks in the Saviour's hands and in His side when He shall come. These marks were in His body when He was raised from the dead. If

the author of Millennial Dawnism believed in a literal resurrection of the body, he would not be involved in such erroneous teaching. Thank God for the truth of the Bible

### Paragraph 82

k. From the scriptures quoted it is evident that Millennial Dawnism is a terrible perversion of the truth of God. In explanatory note h, it is shown where that teaching claims that the thousand years commenced in A. D. 1874. The Bible says that the thousand years begin when the *Lord comes*, and the resurrection takes place. Who is right? The word of God, or Millennial Dawnism? Did the Lord Jesus come to this world in power and great glory in 1874? Were all the graves of the righteous opened in October, 1874? Was the world overturned by the greatest earthquake the world has ever known in 1874? Did the Lord Jesus appear in the clouds of heaven with a shout, with the trump of God, with all the holy angels, in 1874? In order to blind the vision of the ordinary reader, the personal coming of Christ is denied. Those studies teach there is no such thing as a personal coming of Christ. Here is what they say:

"Afterward, during the millennial age, all who shall become his during that thousand years of his *presence* (mis-translated coming)." — *Vol. 1, page 106, 284, 287.*

Many more passages from that work might be quoted which show there is no such thing as a real personal coming of the Saviour. The Bible teaches that the thousand years is ushered in by the personal appearing of the Lord. This teaching, therefore, of Millennial Dawn, robs the children of God of the glorious personal coming of Christ. Can such teaching be true teaching?

### Paragraph 87

1. Millennial Dawnism claims that when the millennial age

begins the select few, known as the "little flock" begin the work of being saviours for all those who are not so good as they are. Now where is the Scripture for such teaching? There are nearly one hundred statements made in volume one of "The Plan of the Ages" of what is to be done by the "little flock" in the millennial age. Here the Bible says that there will not be a single individual good person on the earth at that time, when the thousand years begin. What should we think of such teaching? Can there be anything Christian to such teaching? Is it not truly a perversion of the gospel of the Lord Jesus? Here is just one statement along this line:

"When the called out company . . . who have made their calling and election sure, is complete, then the plan of God for the world's salvation will be only beginning." — *Vol. 1, page 98.*

We have seen also that the Scriptures clearly teach that all who are accepted with Christ at His coming, will be made immortal. Listen to what the author of *Millennial Dawn* says:

"If Adam was mortal and on trial, was he on trial for immortality? The general answer would be, Yes. *We answer, No.*"

"The great mass of mankind saved from the fall, will always be mortal."

"Nowhere in the Scriptures is it stated that angels are immortal, nor that mankind restored will be immortal." — *Vol. 1, page 186.*

Now, dear reader, how does such teaching appeal to you? Can you not see that this is a direct counterpart of rabbinism which led the poor, lost sheep of Israel away from the Messiah at His first advent? The Bible plainly says that at the coming of the Lord, man will be changed to immortality. The word of God says that all the righteous in Christ will be changed to immortality. Even the

author of *Millennial Dawn* says that the answer to the question as to whether man was on trial for immortality should be, Yes. But he says, No. In Job 4:17 it says that man is mortal. In 1 Cor. 15:45-51, it declares that the mortal man at the coming of the Lord will be changed to immortality. But *Millennial Dawnism* says that man will not be changed to immortality. How dare man reply so to God? How dare a man so boldly repudiate the truth of God? God says distinctly that man shall be made immortal at the coming of the Lord. *Millennial Dawnism* says that he will not be made immortal. Friend, believe God.

#### Paragraph 91

m. The father of *Millennial Dawnism* teaches that there are to be a number of classes at the beginning of the millennium. See pages 100, 214, 225, 236, 237, etc. Here is a characteristic statement showing the views of the doctrine on this point:

"In the process . . . Christ Jesus, the head, was first selected; secondly, the church, which is his body. Angels and other spirit classes will rank next; then the worthies of Israel and the world." — *Vol. 1, page 243.*

What a flat contradiction this is of the teaching of the Master. The Lord Jesus and the holy apostles say there are but two classes; *Millennial Dawnism* says there are at least four or five. Shall we not say with the Scripture: "Yea, let God be true"? Romans 3:4.

#### Paragraph 93

n. What a terribly delusive snare to teach mankind of the "coming age," of the "good times coming" in the millennial period, and allow the race to fail of the salvation through Christ which the Lord has brought to all. In volume one of the "*Plan of the Ages*," more than a half dozen times is the thought expressed of the good times com-

ing in the "coming age." Pages 151, 204, 291, 342. Here is a sample statement of this teaching of the "good time coming:"

"Advantage should be taken of circumstances to point the world to the good time coming, to preach to them the coming kingdom of God." — *Page 341.*

It is not surprising that sinners to-day say that they might as well go on in their sins and have all the enjoyment out of this life they can get, as they know that this good time is coming. Then it is no marvel that the author of that work has so little use for missions. Here is what he says of missions:

"But do these act in accordance with their stated belief? No: though they profess to believe that the ignorant will be saved on account of their ignorance, they continue to send missionaries to the heathen at the cost of thousands of valuable lives and millions of money. If they all, or even half of them, would be saved through ignorance, it is doing them a positive injury to send missionaries to teach them of Christ." — *Vol. 1, page 102.*

The Bible says that God does wink at men's ignorance, but He commands all men everywhere to repent. Acts 17: 30. The Lord has such pity on poor fallen humanity, that He calls on His church to send missionaries to teach the poor people of Christ. It was Christ's great love for us poor ignorant sinners that brought Him from heaven to show to us the way of life and salvation. This man positively tells us that it is wrong to go to these poor heathen, to send men and money to tell them of Christ. Away with such professions of Christianity. Think of such teaching being given the name of Christian! Think of the millions of poor souls daily dying out of Christ, and think of the thousands of God's dear children who long to bring the light to these poor dying millions! Then hear such a person say that "it is doing them a positive injury

to send missionaries to teach them of Christ." How can any enlightened person receive such teaching? Is not this the spirit of Antichrist? Is not Jesus the Great Missionary, and did He not say to His children that they should follow in His steps, and go into all the world and tell men and women of the good news of salvation? But Millennial Dawnism says that it is doing the people an injury to teach them of Christ. Is there anything of God in such teaching?

#### Paragraph 96

o. In order to hold his theory together and to "twist the Bible into harmony with it," he is obliged to do something with the word of God and explain away the terrible destruction which is to take place at the coming of the Lord. He says there is to be no literal destruction of things; it is all symbolic. As for instance: When the Lord says that Christ will stand up and there shall be a time of trouble, Millennial Dawnism says:

"The day of trouble will end in due time, when he who spake to the raging Sea of Galilee will likewise, with authority, command the raging sea of human passion, saying, 'Peace! be still.' When the Prince of Peace shall 'stand up' in authority, a great calm will result." — *Vol. I, page 171.*

God's time of trouble and destruction to the Millennial Dawnist means a time of peace and calm. God's declaration that the world will never see such an awful destruction as it will see when Christ stands up to come again, means to Millennial Dawnism the most peaceful and happy time in the world. Cruel and perverse teaching; seductive and deceptive.

When God says there shall be lightnings which shall destroy the people, Millennial Dawnism says that means all mankind shall be blessed. See Vol. I, page 171.



God says that the "Day of the Lord" is to be a cruel time. Hear what the author of that "new light" says:

"This period is called the 'Day of Vengeance of our God,' and a 'Day of Wrath.' (Isa. 61:2; 63:1-4; Ps. 110:5.) And yet the mind that grasps only the idea of anger, or supposes divine malice, seriously errs." — *Vol. I, page 308.*

What can a reasonable person think of such teaching? When God says that He is to punish sin and sinners, this doctrine of Dawnism comes along and says to the sinner, "No, God will not be angry with you. You serve sin all you wish. It is true that the Bible says there is a day of wrath coming, but that means that you are about to have a beautiful time." Thus the poor sinner is hardened in his sins, and does not realize what an awful thing it will be to be caught in the day of God's wrath. Will not such teaching in a measure be responsible for the sins of the sinner? May God pity people who teach such errors! It would seem that the history of the Jewish people should have some influence with them.

Destruction is made to mean that the rich will not be rich. Vol. I, page 314. Earthquakes mean simply revolution, out of which will come a glorious era. See page 336. The fire to destroy the wicked means the refuse part of the system to be overthrown, and the overthrow of present organized governments. Pages 229, 260. The author of that work says that although God says fire, He does not mean fire:

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is a refiner's fire . . . the symbolic fire will destroy every error, and this effect the purification of faith." — *Ibid. page 320.*

What a false hope is held out to the people! May God save the reader from such a terrible delusion.

## Paragraph 97

p. This is what Dawnism says of the binding of the devil:

"The present earth (human society as now organized under Satan's control) must (symbolically) melt and be dissolved, in the beginning of the 'Day of the Lord,' which 'shall burn as an oven.' (Mal. 4:1)"

"The strong man (Satan), being bound, will struggle to retain his power." — *Ibid*, page 69.

"This increase of knowledge among men, . . . is one of the mighty influences which are now at work binding Satan — curtailing his influence and circumscribing his power in this 'Day of Preparation' for the setting up of God's kingdom in the earth." — *Ibid*, page 265.

"The preparation for this general diffusion of knowledge began with the invention of printing." — *Ibid*, page 265.

How any reasonable person can imagine that the printing-press to-day is curtailing Satan's power and in this way binding him, is certainly beyond the comprehension of human thought. Look at the millions and millions of pages of reading matter which Satan is to-day having his emissaries put out to poison the minds of both young and old. Think what an engine of destruction the press is at the present time in the hands of the enemies of God. While much good is being done in printing the word of God and the blessed books to advance the knowledge of God's truth in the world, millions of dollars are being invested and spent by the agents of Satan to increase his power. And it is being done year by year. Yet we are taught that the printing-press is one way of binding Satan. Oh what deception! How out of harmony with the word of God! How far from the holy truth! How such teaching must please the enemy of souls; it is such an opportunity for him to ensnare souls. Thank God for the truth which, in Christ, makes one free.

**Paragraph 108**

p. It is clear in the Bible that God has been and is calling the sons of Adam in this world to be saved. All men may have the chance, and have it before the Lord comes; for they will not have it after He comes. It clearly says that God is calling all. See Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:16, 17. Still Dawnism says, No. Here is a statement:

"In selecting the 'little flock,' God makes a very general call—'many are called.' All are not called." — *Ibid*, page 195.

How this contradicts the words of the Bible! The Saviour says He sends His Spirit to call all; Dawnism says "All are not called." Which is true? See Rev. 14:6-12; Rom. 10:8-13; 2 Pet. 2:5.

**A FEW OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

While the author of this work has no desire to weary the reader with statements from the writings of Dawnism, it is apparent that the teachings of that "ism" are altogether contrary to the word of God. There are many other teachings in that system contrary to the word of God, that some consideration should be given to, in view of the fact that Millennial Dawnism is making such headway. It is like the tares in the field. Matt. 13:24-30. While it is the work of an enemy, to many people it seems much like the wheat. It is our desire to show the reader that, while there are scriptures used to twist the Bible to fit into the theory, it is not only a dreadful heresy, but it is most blasphemous against the blessed Christ.

It teaches that man had but a human saviour. It teaches that Christ was only a man when here on earth.

"He (Jesus) became a man." — *Ibid*, page 178.

"It was necessary that a perfect man should die for mankind." — *Page 229*.

"On this plane Jesus spent three and one-half years of

his life,—until his human existence ended on the cross.”  
— *Page 230.*

Oh what wicked teaching! what cruel error! How it robs the divine and blessed Christ of His divinity and glory! The Bible says:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.” 1 Tim. 3:16.

God Himself announced in the hearing of the multitudes that Jesus Christ was His dearly beloved Son. Matt. 3:17. The angel Gabriel told Mary that the holy child that she should bear was the Son of God. Luke 1:35. The Saviour repeatedly said that He was the Son of God. John 11:4; Matt. 16:16. He was called the Son of God by Satan himself while on the earth (Matt. 8:29), and many people testified that He was the Son of God. John 1:49. How sad to rob Jesus of His divinity! Again it is true that the Master is wounded in the house of His friends. It would not seem so cruel for those to speak lightly of the divine Lord who are opposed to Him; but to think that one who professes to love Him should allow himself so to be deceived, and so to deny His Lord and Master, is indeed sad. He, Jesus, is the Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:68, 69.

It is true that Jesus in order to save man did partake of human nature. This the Bible clearly teaches; but He never lost His divinity. He was both human and divine. He was Son of God and Son of man. But Dawnism makes no such allowance. That we may not misrepresent the teaching of Millennial Dawnism, we quote from its own works:

“Neither was Jesus a combination of two natures, human and spiritual. The blending of two natures produces neither the one nor the other, but an imperfect hybrid thing.” — *Ibid.* page 179.

Such teaching has the flavor of the bottomless pit. Is it not sad that thousands are seduced into believing that this kind of doctrine is Christian? To think of millions of copies of such works being sold under the name of Bible teaching, and by the agency of Christian people, is dreadful.

Again: "Thus we see that in Jesus there was no mixture of natures, but that he twice experienced a change of nature." — *Page 180.*

All that the Bible says of Christ's glory, and Christ's divine power is nothing with the author of that terrible doctrine.

His equality with God is therefore denied; for Dawnism says:

"If this principle be a correct one, it would show that God had no right to create Jesus higher than the angels, and then *further to exalt him to divine nature*, unless he intended to do the same for all the angels and for all men." — *Page 188.*

Jesus said that He and His Father were one. John 10:30. He said that He was with the Father before the world was. John 17:5. He taught that all things were made by Him. John 1:1-3. He said that as the Father had life in Himself, so the Son also had life in Himself. John 5:26. Still this venomous teaching declares that Jesus was not divine by nature. That we may correctly understand when Christ was divine from the point of view of Millennial Dawn, here is what is written:

"The divine nature is the highest and the superior of all spiritual natures. *Christ at his resurrection was made so much better than perfect angels as the divine is superior to the angelic nature.*" — *Page 176.*

Again: "That, as a reward for this sacrifice, and in order to the completion of the great work of atonement, he was highly exalted, even to the divine nature." — *Page 172.*

"Our Lord, since his resurrection, is a spirit being — *Page 184.*

"Since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, then, two beings are immortal." — *Page 211.*

"Jesus, therefore, at and after his resurrection, was spirit, — a spirit being, and no longer a human being in any sense." — *Page 231.*

Thus the church of Christ is robbed of a divine-human Saviour now, as Jesus was robbed of His divinity formerly. Not until after the resurrection was Jesus divine, say Dawnism. How then can poor, fallen humanity now have a sympathizing Saviour if He has lost all human sympathy? No, indeed, He is the same divine Christ as when he was on earth; He is the same sympathetic Son of man as He was when He walked among men. He was the Spirit man before He came and when He was here, as he has been since. He is both God and man. Heb. 2: 14-18; 4: 15, 16. 1 Cor. 15: 45, 47.

But such are the teachings of Dawnism. This doctrine sounds like the voice of the wolf, although it presents itself in sheep's clothing. What is the object of Dawnism's teaching that Jesus was only a man and was only divine after the resurrection? Because it wants the "select crowd," that "little flock" to be like God. It is the same old story, man wants to be like God. Gen. 3: 5. It is not satisfied that man shall have the place that God in Christ gave to him, — man exalted and redeemed through the blood of Christ, and saved through Jesus. It has the same spirit of him who said, "I will be like the Most High." "I will ascend into heaven." Isa. 14: 12-14. Here is what is written on this point:

"It is also of God's favor that the Lord Jesus and His bride become partakers of the divine nature." — *Page 189.*

To cap the climax, however, the position is taken that

it was necessary for this "select" flock to be divine in order to make *the Christ*.

"The Christ will be the head of all things." — *Page 241.*

"Those who will constitute the spiritual phase of the kingdom are the overcoming saints of the gospel age—the Christ, Head and body—glorified." — *Page 288.*

"He (the apostle) goes further and shows that those earthly promises can not and will not be fulfilled until the still higher heavenly promises concerning the Christ (Head and body) are fulfilled." — *Page 293.*

"The Deliverer (Christ, Head and body) shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." — *Page 300.*

"The great work before this glorious anointed company—the Christ—necessitates their exaltation to the divine nature." — *Pages 288, 289.*

Is it necessary to continue? Have you, dear reader, seen the awful teachings of Millennial Dawnism? Do you not see how it resembles the teachings of the rabbis in exalting self and in doing away with the Messiah? This awful doctrine actually teaches that only this "little flock" will be the priests and kings, and the only ones who are to be immortal. There is no sure opportunity for any others. Speaking of others who will be saved in the millennium (?), here is what is said of the "little flock:"

"They (others) will serve God in his temple, and stand before the throne, having palms in their hands (Rev. 7:9-17); but though that will be glorious, it will not be so glorious as the position of the 'little flock' of overcomers, who will be kings and priests unto God." — *Page 214.*

"Since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, then, two beings are immortal; and, amazing grace! the same offer is made to the Bride of the Lamb, being selected during the gospel age. Yet not all of the great company who are nominally of the church will receive this great prize, but only that 'little flock.' . . . This immortality, the

independent, self-existent, divine nature, is the life to which the narrow way leads." — *Page 211.*

One can almost imagine himself back in the days of Christ, and hear the rabbis tell the people how *they* were the "select few," and no one could have the chance that they had. What a terrible disappointment it was to them when the Lord Jesus told them that *every one* had the opportunity of being saved (Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:37); and many whom they thought would be left out, would be the ones to be saved. Matt. 21:31. The rabbis would be the ones who possibly might not enter the kingdom.

Dawnism claims to teach the Bible, but it does not give the proof. Dawnism makes assertions, draws inferences, and assumes probabilities, but it does not give the word of God for proof. See Vol. 1, pages 220, 246, 277.

Dawnism, in the light of the word of God, has been weighed in the balances and has been found wanting. Dan. 5:27. It has built up a theory that *appears* reasonable, and has attempted to twist the Bible into harmony with it. Page 163, Vol. 1. How much better it would be, and

"How much more becoming, to come humbly to God's word and to '*ask*' concerning things to come, than to '*command*' or to assert that he must carry out our ideas." — *Page 191.* 2 Pet. 2:1, 2; 1 John 4:1-3.



**CHAPTER XIX**

**THE PROPHET ELIJAH, AND  
HIS WORK OF PREPARATION**

**Copied from Practical Lessons by F.C. Gilbert 1914 Edition**







**Elijah the Prophet**

## **CHAPTER XIX**

### **THE PROPHET ELIJAH, AND HIS WORK OF PREPARATION**

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And  
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every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Matt. 7: 24-27.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22: 14.

**I**T seems clear from the Bible that the God of heaven did all in His power, and made every provision possible, whereby the people might be ready to meet His Son Jesus at His first advent. There is one passage of Scripture which certainly has a tinge of pathos when regarded in this light, and it reads as follows:

"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"<sup>1</sup>

2. From the language of this verse, it would seem as though the Lord had exhausted all His resources in order that everything might be done that could be done, so that the people would have no possible excuse.<sup>2</sup> The Lord of heaven had made everything so plain and clear, that He could do no more to make full and ample preparation for the people to be ready to meet His Son, the Messiah, at His advent.

<sup>1</sup>Isa. 5: 3, 4. <sup>2</sup>Rom. 1: 20; Matt. 22: 12.

## THE MESSAGE OF ELIJAH

3. Among the truths and prophecies the Lord had given them was one which should have been very significant, and it would have been a pointed prophecy, if the rabbis had not perverted its meaning, as they did that of many other prophecies which referred to the coming of the Messiah. This prophecy is found in the closing part of the Old Testament, and reads like this:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."<sup>a</sup>

4. This utterance of the prophet became a landmark in the history of the Hebrew people, and from generation to generation, from father to son, from rabbi to disciple, it was handed down, each generation adding something to its meaning. In chapter two of this volume, is given an account of the manner that the Jews accumulated traditional teachings; among these teachings were many things, said by different rabbis concerning this statement of the prophet and its relation to the coming of the Messiah. One of the rabbinical schools had become known as the school of Elijah, and many things were attributed to the prophet Elijah which probably never were said by him, and never were intended to be taught concerning him. (a)

<sup>a</sup>Mal. 4 : 5. 6.

For instance: The rabbis teach that the original Elijah, who first came to king Ahab, had been on a visit with the king to comfort Hiel, the Bethelite.<sup>4</sup> While they were there, a question arose for discussion between Elijah and the wicked king. Ahab asked Elijah why it was that the words of Joshua, the disciple of Moses, were fulfilled, and the words of Moses, the great prophet himself, were not fulfilled. Joshua said that the man who rose up to build Jericho should be cursed of God; he should lay the foundation of the city in his firstborn, and should set up the gates of the city in his youngest son, and this had happened to Hiel.<sup>5</sup>

5. Moses said that when the people turned away from the worship of the true God and turned to the worship of idols, the heavens should be shut up, and there should be no rain, and all things should be dried up.<sup>6</sup> Here we see that the prophecy of Joshua, Moses' disciple, was fulfilled, because Hiel the Bethelite, who built Jericho, laid the foundation of the city in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates of it in his youngest son Segub. This was done to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Joshua the son of Nun.

6. You know, Elijah, that the whole land is full of idolatry. All the people of Israel are worshipping idols, and they have turned away from the worship of the true God, exactly as Moses prophesied,<sup>7</sup> yet we

<sup>4</sup>1 Kings 16: 34. <sup>5</sup>Joshua 6: 26, 27; 1 Kings 16: 34.

<sup>6</sup>Deut. 11: 16, 17. <sup>7</sup>1 Kings 16: 26, 33.



**A Rabbi and His Pupil**



do not see the prediction of Moses fulfilled, but we do see the word of Joshua fulfilled.

7. The rabbis claim that then it was that Elijah turned to the king, and said to him:

"As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."<sup>8</sup>

The eminent Rashi, the great commentaries, the "Comments of David," the "Comments of Zion," and other rabbinical authorities, claim this is what the rabbis said that the great prophet Elijah taught.

#### THE MEANING OF ELIJAH'S COMING

8. The tradition had grown up among the Jewish rabbis that this prophecy concerning Elijah meant that before the great and dreadful day of the Lord came, there must first appear the same Elijah who was here on earth in the days of Ahab, the man who restored the people of Israel back to God, and who destroyed the idolatry which existed in Israel.<sup>9</sup> This Elijah must be the very identical man who was on earth once, and who had been translated to heaven.<sup>10</sup> He must appear in the same form as when he was on earth, and must come with his staff and with his girdle, as the prophet Elijah walked while here among men.

9. Rabbis and parents united in teaching the children that the Messiah could not come till this Elijah

<sup>8</sup>1 Kings 17: 1. <sup>9</sup>Matt. 17: 10; 1 Kings 18.

<sup>10</sup>2 Kings 2: 10, 11.

had come; for the prophet Malachi had declared that it should even so come to pass. Whoever might come, claiming to be Elijah, but who was not the real man himself, could not be the person who was referred to in the prophecy of Malachi. The people were thoroughly taught on this point, and continuously warned, in order that they might not be deceived by some spurious personage, and by some false Messiah.

10. It was true that there would be no man living who could identify him as the real Elijah; but the rabbis taught that when he came, the Most High would make it clear to the people that it was the real Elijah, and that until such a man came, the Messiah could not, and would not, appear.

#### THE GREAT PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

11. Another idea had grown up in connection with the rabbinical teaching of this scripture in Malachi, and had become associated with it, for the rabbis claimed that the prophet had associated the two in his prediction; namely, that before the Messiah came, in order for the laws of Moses to be fulfilled, with the statutes and the judgments, there must come the great prophet like unto Moses.<sup>11</sup> God had told Moses that there should be raised up a prophet like unto himself. This was one of the statutes in the law of Moses; and the Messiah of Israel would not come till this great prophet had appeared. Therefore the rab-

<sup>11</sup>Malachi 4:4; Deut. 18:15-18.

bis had come to associate these two persons together, and taught the Jews that no Messiah could come, and that the day of the Lord could not appear, till the great prophet like unto Moses had made his appearance, and Elijah the prophet had come back to earth again. These teachings were deeply rooted in the hearts of the Jewish people by the rabbis, and their view of these scriptures was expounded to the laity as the true meaning of the word of God.

12. For nearly four hundred years prior to the advent of Jesus and of the Baptist, these things were taught the people.<sup>12</sup> They were not written in books then, as were the Scriptures, but were taught orally from father to son, from rabbi to pupil. Whenever a great teacher came who claimed that he was a man especially raised up of God to do a great work among the Jews, the rabbis generally put certain questions to him, to find out if he were the person referred to in the prophecy. The rabbis were wary and very cautious; and their view of the teaching and exposition of the word of God had such a hold on the people that no layman thought he could understand any teaching, unless it were first strained through the sieve of the scribes, the rabbis, the Pharisees.<sup>13</sup>

13. If the reader will bear these things in mind, he will the better appreciate the condition of affairs as we proceed with this theme, and he will better under-

<sup>12</sup>Matt. 17: 10. <sup>13</sup>Matt. 23: 13, 24.

stand some scriptures in their relation to the Saviour, to John the Baptist, and to the Saviour's first advent.<sup>14</sup> With the death of Malachi the prophet, the spirit of prophecy ceased in the Jewish church. They had no living prophet among them who taught the people the true meaning of the word of God;<sup>15</sup> they had only the rabbis and the scribes to give them this instruction, and the Sanhedrin decided whether all questions were strictly orthodox or otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

#### WHY THE LEADERS QUESTIONED JOHN THE BAPTIST'S AUTHORITY

14. When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, the people were aroused.<sup>17</sup> It had been a long time since a teacher had come among the Jews who had so stirred the people as he moved them. When word came to the leaders of the people that such a person was preaching to the Jews, it was questioned whether he came to Israel with proper authority. First, John was not known to have made any record in any of the rabbinical schools. In fact, he was not known to the rabbis.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, it was not customary for the rabbis to teach in any such manner as John was teaching. The rabbis generally gathered in certain homes,<sup>19</sup> or buildings, or synagogues, or schools, or in the temple to teach;<sup>20</sup> but seldom did

<sup>14</sup>Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11. <sup>15</sup>Ps. 74: 9. <sup>16</sup>Matt. 23: 1-3;

5: 22. <sup>17</sup>Matt. 3: 5; Mark 1: 5; Luke 3: 7.

<sup>18</sup>Luke 1: 80; Matt. 3: 1. <sup>19</sup>Mark. 2: 1-13;

Luke 7: 36-47. <sup>20</sup>John 8: 1, 2; 7: 14.

they preach in the manner in which John was teaching. This manner of conducting services was entirely out of the ordinary. Thirdly, this John was publicly denouncing the leaders of the nation, the very men who were considered the foundation of the whole Jewish economy.<sup>21</sup> This, too, was something not generally recognizable. Fourthly, he never went to the rabbis and scholars to consult with them concerning his teaching, neither did he get instruction from them whether it would be proper or allowable to declare his message. Fifthly, he made no discrimination between the scholars and the illiterate; to John everybody seemed alike.<sup>22</sup> This was not in harmony with the rabbinical teaching. Sixthly, his message was a strange one. The rabbis taught that when Elijah came, Israel would have become either very good or very bad. Either they would have reached that state of goodness that they would merit the favor of the Holy One of Israel, so that He would wish to come and destroy their enemies, the Romans, and give the kingdom to Israel, as the rabbis claimed that Daniel and the other prophets taught;<sup>23</sup> or else they would have all become so wicked, that the worst sinners in Israel would be destroyed, and favor would be shown to the learned rabbinical class for their devotion to the law and to the knowledge of God.

But this man's message was a message of repen-

<sup>21</sup>Matt. 3: 7.

<sup>22</sup>Luke 3: 7-14.

<sup>23</sup>Luke 1: 71; Dan. 2: 44; 7: 27.

tance;<sup>24</sup> it was a message of preparing the way of the Lord;<sup>25</sup> it was a message the like of which had not been known or heard in Israel, — a message which had not been handed down by any of the rabbis to be given to the children of Abraham.

#### SANHEDRIN INVESTIGATING JOHN'S LABORS

15. These things had a tendency to surprise the rabbis and leaders of the Jewish nation. Here was a condition which was different from anything which they had ever known or heard. However, after the people flocked to hear John,<sup>26</sup> and some of the rabbis and Pharisees themselves had heard him,<sup>27</sup> the leaders concluded that there must be something to the message of this man, and there must be an effort made to find out who he was. From the record, as brought to view in John, they evidently followed the rabbinical method in ascertaining who he was and what was his work.

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that [margin, a prophet? Doubtless referring to the prophet of Deut. 18: 15-18] prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet

<sup>24</sup>Matt. 3: 2. <sup>25</sup>Mark 1: 3. <sup>26</sup>Mark 1: 5. <sup>27</sup>Matt. 3: 7.



Worshipping the Sun Toward the East

Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees."<sup>19</sup>

16. It would seem clear from this scripture that the Sanhedrin, the leading council of the Jewish nation had called their constituted body together,<sup>20</sup> and after deliberation, had concluded that this man's claim was worthy of official investigation. (b) The crowds were flocking to the wilderness to hear him, and he was a man of great power.<sup>21</sup> He was a factor that had to be reckoned with. Inasmuch as the rabbis had had many notable characters to deal with in days gone by,<sup>21</sup> the time had evidently come that the leading official body of the church must take cognizance of this man and of his work; and place themselves on record, after official investigation, as to their opinion of the man and his conduct. They therefore sent the body of men who were the proper representatives of the nation, the priests and the Levites,<sup>22</sup> and these men were to report to the council their findings. It was doubtless because of this report that they had to deliver, that they approached John as they did.<sup>23</sup> The council having had handed to it by their predecessors the teachings of the rabbis concerning the Elijah and the prophet like unto Moses, as contained in the prophecy of Malachi,<sup>24</sup> instructed them what questions should be put to John.<sup>25</sup>

17. John gave them his answer. He told them

<sup>19</sup>John 1: 19-24. <sup>20</sup>Matt. 2: 4; John 7: 45 to 8: 1; Acts 5: 21.

<sup>21</sup>Luke 3: 7. <sup>22</sup>Acts 5: 33-37. <sup>23</sup>Mal. 2: 1, 4, 7, 8; 3: 3.

<sup>24</sup>John 7: 45-47. <sup>25</sup>Mal. 4: 5, 6. <sup>26</sup>John 1: 19-22.



plainly that he was not the Christ, he was not the Elijah, neither was he the prophet referred to in Deut. 18: 15-18, as they were taught by the Pharisees and by the scribes to regard that prophet.<sup>36</sup> He told them that he was preparing the way of the Lord, and had come to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, which the council ought to fully understand.<sup>37</sup>

18. But the committee were not satisfied with John's answer, as there were other considerations connected with the work he was doing. They were there to make a thorough investigation. It might be possible that the destiny of the nation hung upon the work of this man. Therefore much depended upon the investigation of this body of representative men. So they asked him further:

"Why baptizeth thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."<sup>38</sup>

19. For a rabbi to baptize meant a great deal. The law of *To-ho-ros*, purification, taught that when a person was immersed with water, there was a great meaning attached to the same. It might be that the candidate was a stranger becoming a full-fledged Israelite. It might mean that he was a great sinner, and took this way to dispose of his sins. Even though

<sup>36</sup>John 1: 20, 21. <sup>37</sup>Matt. 3: 3; Mark 1: 3;  
John 1: 23. <sup>38</sup>John I: 25-27.

the baptism of the candidate were in harmony with the laws of the rabbis, the man who performed the ceremony must have some special purpose in performing such a service. They therefore wanted to know on what ground he was baptizing the people. This, too, they must report back to the council. And John gave them his reason why he was baptizing.<sup>39</sup>

20. It is evident that the committee went back to the Sanhedrin and gave to them the report of their investigation, and the council must have reached certain things in their findings. They certainly concluded one thing, and that was that this man was neither the Messiah nor Elijah the prophet; for he himself had so confessed. He told this investigating committee that he was neither that prophet, nor the Messiah, nor Elijah.<sup>40</sup> The council doubtless felt that no matter what work John was doing, no matter to what scripture he might refer as proof that his work was genuine, he did not fulfil the specifications called for in the book of Malachi, and they had no fears to entertain that he was the forerunner of the Messiah. From their standpoint, John himself had plainly admitted that he was not the man who was fulfilling the scripture of Malachi.

21. Again; they must have concluded that he could not be the man that was referred to in Malachi's prophecy, since he told the committee that he was not *that*

<sup>39</sup>Mark 1:8. <sup>40</sup>John 1:20, 21.



**Ezra Reading the Law**

prophet.<sup>41</sup> In their minds, he disassociated himself from the statutes and the judgments of Moses, which were referred to by the last Old Testament prophet, and which were associated by the rabbis with the coming of the Elijah and with the advent of the Messiah. So, whoever he was, he could be neither the Elijah nor the Messiah; for he did not fulfil, according to their view, the text referred to in the prophecy of Malachi.

**JOHN'S ANSWER TROUBLED THE LEADERS**

22. But John said one thing that must have troubled

<sup>41</sup>Mal. 4 : 5.

them. He told the priests and Levites that he was a forerunner;<sup>43</sup> for he was preparing the way. And, too, he was preparing the way of the Lord. He declared to them that there was One in their midst who was to follow him, although they did not know Him.<sup>44</sup> There is no doubt that this statement of John must have worried them; for it contained certain parts of a message which applied to the prophecy of Malachi. Here is the scripture:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."<sup>45</sup>

23. We notice that John told them exactly what this part of the prophecy of Malachi predicted. He informed them that he was preparing the way of the Lord; then it was the Lord who was in their midst, and they did not know Him. This was surely what John had in mind,<sup>46</sup> therefore they could not harmonize the man with his work. Here was a man who told the leaders of the church that he was doing a work which the prophecy said should be done before the advent of the Messiah; still he did not bear the name that they thought he should bear, as outlined in the prophecy.<sup>47</sup>

24. Furthermore, according to this testimony of

<sup>43</sup>John 1: 23.      <sup>44</sup>John 1: 26, 27.      <sup>45</sup>Mal. 3: 1.

<sup>46</sup>John 1: 29-33; Matt. 3: 13-17. <sup>47</sup>Mal. 4: 5.

John, they were told that they did not know the Lord, although he was in their very midst.<sup>47</sup> This statement must have troubled them. It is evident from the Scripture that when the Sanhedrin heard the testimony of the priests and Levites, they concluded that John was a deceiver, and so they rejected him.<sup>48</sup> They therefore concluded that the One who was to follow him must likewise be a deceiver.<sup>49</sup> They decided that he was not the Lord for whom they were looking;<sup>50</sup> he was not the kind of Messiah they were told was coming.<sup>51</sup> They decided that since John told them that his name was not Elijah, they preferred to take the man's name rather than to accept the work;<sup>52</sup> they therefore cast him aside and the One who was to come after him.<sup>53</sup> They refused to recognize the work, choosing rather the name than the work. Here is what the Word says:

"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."<sup>54</sup>

25. We therefore see that the reason why the Jewish people rejected the work of John the Baptist as the work of Elijah the prophet, was because of the wrong views of Scripture they had received from the rabbis, the teachers, and the Pharisees. It is true that the Scripture said that Elijah the prophet would

<sup>47</sup>John 1: 26. <sup>48</sup>Luke 7: 30, 33. <sup>49</sup>Matt. 17: 12; Luke 7: 34.

<sup>50</sup>Luke 19: 14.

<sup>51</sup>John 7: 12.

<sup>52</sup>Luke 7: 30.

<sup>53</sup>John 7: 28; John 5: 33-36. <sup>54</sup>Luke 7: 29, 30.

come before the great and terrible day of the Lord;<sup>56</sup> but the rabbis had the program all arranged as to who this person should be, and just how this Elijah must come. While it is true that God had said there were several things Elijah should do when he came; that, he should turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,<sup>57</sup> and prepare the way of the Lord; the rabbis were not so particular about the work Elijah was to do as they were particular about his name. To these leaders the work was secondary; the name was the more important. They were very careful and very particular to strain out the gnat, even though they swallowed the camel.<sup>57(c)</sup> Inasmuch as the prophecy said that God's messenger should prepare the way of the Lord, since they rejected John as not being the man for whom they were looking, it was but natural for them to reject the One he announced as the Messiah, — the Lord whom they were expecting.<sup>58</sup>

26. The way that God had always preserved Israel was by the voice of the prophets.<sup>59</sup> The prophets of the Lord were the ones who gave the people the real and the true teaching of the word of God. For three hundred years and more they had not had the voice of the prophet. The Jews had substituted a voice of God of their own; consequently they were not in a

<sup>56</sup>Mal. 4: 5.    <sup>57</sup>Mal. 4: 6.    <sup>57</sup>Matt. 23: 24.    <sup>58</sup>Mal. 3: 1.

<sup>59</sup>Hos. 12: 13; Ps. 77: 20; 2 Chron. 36: 15, 16;

Jer. 7: 25; 25: 4; 29: 19; Hos. 12: 10.

condition to appreciate the true voice of God when it came.<sup>60</sup>

#### THE TIME RIPE FOR ELIJAH'S MESSAGE

27. The time had come when God was to visit and redeem His people;<sup>61</sup> the time when the prophet Malachi's prediction was to have its fulfilment.<sup>62</sup> Now God would do a great thing for His people. He had already told them through the prophet that He could do no more than what He had done,<sup>63</sup> and He would make no exception to the rule at this time.<sup>64</sup> Consequently He began the fulfilment of this prediction by working a miracle as is recorded in the following scripture:

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. . . . And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth

<sup>60</sup>John 1:11; 10:3, 5, 6, 26, 27. <sup>61</sup>Luke 1:68. <sup>62</sup>Luke 1:16.

<sup>63</sup>Isa. 5:4. <sup>64</sup>Amos 3:7; Deut. 29:29.

shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."<sup>65</sup>

28. The angel Gabriel, who had given all the prophecies of the Bible concerning the coming of the Messiah,<sup>66</sup> now came to this aged servant of God with the message of assurance that the time had come when the way of the Lord was to be prepared.<sup>67</sup> This old man was selected as the one through whom the forerunner should come, and the work was all laid out before him. The message came from the God of heaven who had given the prophecy concerning the advent of the Messiah;<sup>68</sup> and this mighty angel declared that the child which Zacharias was to have,

<sup>65</sup>Luke 1: 5-20. <sup>66</sup>Dan. 8: 16; 9: 21; 10: 11, 13, 21; Rev. 1: 1.

<sup>67</sup>Luke 1: 14, 16. <sup>68</sup>Dan. 9: 21, 25-27.



was to be the one whom God had selected to do this work, as predicted in the prophecy of Malachi.<sup>69</sup> It was this same angel who had given the prophecy to Malachi; it was this angel who had given the prophecy to Daniel; this is the angel who is commissioned to give all the prophecies.<sup>70</sup> Who then better than he can tell when the prophecies are to be fulfilled? The child's birth is to be miraculous; and God Himself by His Holy Spirit through His angel tells this man of God the story of the work of this peculiar child.<sup>71</sup>

29. Note what he says: This child is to go before the Lord in the *spirit* and in the *power* of Elijah. He is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, and to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. This is the child who has been selected of God to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. Now mark, this message comes to Zacharias unexpectedly;<sup>72</sup> he is unwarned; he knows nothing of what is to occur; he is unprepared. A messenger comes to him from the courts of glory; the man of God is frightened, for he hears strange and wonderful things. He becomes a doubter, and is smitten for his unbelief, because God will have his way worked out.<sup>73</sup>

#### MESSIAH ABOUT TO COME

30. What does it all mean?—God is about to fulfil that wonderful prophecy in Malachi. The time is

<sup>69</sup>Mal. 3 : 1 ; 4 : 5, 6. <sup>70</sup>Rev. 22 : 6 ; Luke 1 : 19. <sup>71</sup>Luke 1 : 17.

<sup>72</sup>Luke 1 : 12. <sup>73</sup>Luke 1 : 20.



**The Moabite Stone**

here when Elijah is to appear. It takes inspiration to prepare the way, and an angel from heaven to explain the Scripture. It needs inspiration from God to make clear what the rabbis have covered up with the rubbish of human explanations and of human reasonings. Elijah is to come; the Lord is to appear; the prophecy of Malachi which God has given is to be fulfilled; and God will do all he can to make things plain to the people.<sup>74</sup> He works a wonderful miracle for them.<sup>75</sup> They are soon to see a man come and deliver a message<sup>76</sup> of preparation for the coming of the Lord. It is to be the message which this same angel had predicted several hundred years before by the prophet Malachi. It is the message of Elijah the prophet. But the people must clearly understand the nature of the work and of the message. Therefore the Lord reveals the work to this man of God by assuring him that the message will be the fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi, but it will be performed by his child. He is not to be called *Elijah*, but *John*. The name of the man is to be *John*, but the work he is to do is that of *Elijah*. Thank God for the inspiration of heavenly influences to make clear the word of God.<sup>77</sup> Oh, that Israel had understood and had realized it, what would it have meant to her then!<sup>78</sup> And if the children of God could understand the larger, broader, and deeper import of this

<sup>74</sup>Amos 3: 7. <sup>75</sup>Luke 1: 65. <sup>76</sup>Luke 1: 66.

<sup>77</sup>1 Pet. 1: 10-12. <sup>78</sup>Isa. 48: 18.

message, what might it mean to the people in this day!<sup>79</sup>

31. Here we have before us the angel's explanation of the prophecy of Malachi. This man John is to go before the Lord with the power and with the spirit of Elijah, to do the work which must be done to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. This is what the Lord wished Israel to know; this is what the people should have known; this is what the Holy Spirit desired the leaders of the church to know.<sup>80</sup>

32. When the Sanhedrin sent to John to ask of him if he were the Messiah, he was correct in saying that he was not. When they asked him if he were Elijah, he was correct in answering negatively.<sup>81</sup> He was not the man Elijah, but he had the message of Elijah. He was the person who did the work which God said should be done by Elijah just prior to the coming of the Messiah.

#### PEOPLE TAUGHT ELIJAH MUST FIRST COME

33. The Jewish leaders of the church, having had a wrong view of the Scriptures, turned away from John's work, and from his message; still they taught the people that before the Messiah could come, Elijah the prophet must come. That we may clearly understand this point, let us turn to a scripture, and note its significance:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high

<sup>79</sup>Heb. 4:1, 11. <sup>80</sup>Luke 19:42, 44. <sup>81</sup>John 1:20, 21.

mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. . . . And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered, and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not."<sup>82</sup>

34. We note, then, that the Jews at the time of the Messiah's appearance on earth, believed that before the Holy One of Israel came, Elijah must appear; they had been taught that He could not come till after Elijah had made his appearance. When the disciples asked Jesus the question, He answered it in the affirmative. Certainly, Elias must come. This is what the Scripture said, and the Scripture can not be broken.<sup>83</sup> What the word of God said must be carried out, for not one word of the Lord is allowed to fail.<sup>84</sup> So I tell you, my disciples, that Elias must truly come, even as the scribes have said; but I wish you to know that Elias has already come. The Elias that the scribes say is yet to come, has already appeared. Jesus did not differ from the teaching of the scribes, when their teaching was in harmony with the word of God; but he differed from them in their application of the teaching. Jesus then said, But Elias

<sup>82</sup>Matt. 17: 1-12. <sup>83</sup>John 10: 35. <sup>84</sup>1 Kings 8: 56;  
Joshua 21: 45; 23: 14.

is come already, and the people to whom he came did not discern him as the Elijah.<sup>85</sup> The trouble was they did not see the work that the man did when he appeared. Instead of knowing the word of God and understanding its spiritual application, the scribes so adhered to the mere letter as expounded by the rabbis, that the man who came and did the work which God said should be done by Elijah, they entirely passed by, wholly rejecting him and his work.<sup>86</sup> And I wish you to know, my disciples, that as a result of the rabbis' and the people's rejecting the man who did the work of Elijah, they will also reject me the Messiah, the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel.<sup>87</sup>

#### JESUS RECOGNIZES THE TRUE ELIJAH AND HIS MESSAGE

35. That we may see the force and meaning of this statement of Jesus, let us turn to another scripture having a direct bearing on this subject. Here is what is written :

" And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* . . . For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And

<sup>85</sup>Matt. 17: 12. <sup>86</sup>Mark 12: 24, 27. <sup>87</sup>Matt. 27: 63-66.

*if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.*"<sup>88</sup>

36. Here we have the whole story explained in a very clear light. Jesus, the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, takes up the thread which is being unraveled by the angel Gabriel, and explains the matter very simply to the minds of the disciples. It is said in another place, when Jesus told them concerning John's work that he was the Elijah:

"Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."<sup>89</sup>

Jesus and the angel Gabriel had already made many things clear which were dark to the minds of His children;<sup>90</sup> they were able to do the same at this time. We plainly see that the inspiration of God had breathed into the Word the light of God; and the same inspiration was now needed to make the word of God clear concerning the Messiah, as was necessary to give the Word in the beginning.<sup>91</sup>

37. There was perfect harmony between John and Jesus. There was no contradiction between them. The prophecy had declared that Elijah would come, and that he would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. But the tradition of the rabbis and of the church teachers, was so perverse and misleading, that the people of God were being turned away from the truth.<sup>92</sup> Satan was so distorting the word of the Lord, and was so controlling the minds of the people, that

<sup>88</sup>Matt. 11: 7-15. <sup>89</sup>Matt. 17: 13. <sup>90</sup>Dan. 8: 13-17.

<sup>91</sup>2 Tim. 3: 16, 17. <sup>92</sup>Matt. 23: 13.

when the time came for the fulfilment of the prophecy, they had such erroneous views that they could not see the fulfilment of the same in the light of inspiration.

38. God sought to restore the spirit of inspiration in the church. He sent the angel who for centuries had given prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. This angel came to the man of God who was well known as a priest, and to this man of God the angel declared that the prophecy of Malachi was to be fulfilled. A manifold miracle was performed, and all the people of Israel learned about it.<sup>92</sup> For a number of years the church had the opportunity of pondering this great and wonderful manifestation of God.

The time came when the man who had been selected to carry out this great work of preparation for the coming of the Messiah began his labors. The leaders of the church felt that the man was doing a great work, and that they must take notice of it. But he had not been trained in the same schools with them; he did not bear the name that they thought he should bear; he did not do the work in the manner that they thought he should do it. He was carrying on the work in harmony with the Scriptures and with the prophecy concerning the forerunner, but he was not performing it in harmony with their views.

39. Finally the Messiah appears. The leaders seek

<sup>92</sup>Luke 1: 58-63.



to show that there is a contradiction between John and the Messiah. John says he is not Elijah; Jesus says he is Elijah. Who is correct? Is there not a dissonance? — Nay, verily. The angel Gabriel reveals from heaven that the work of John is to be carried on in the *spirit* and in the *power of Elijah*. Although the man who does the work bears the name John, meaning the beloved of the Lord, he is the one of whom it is written, the man who is to prepare the way of the Lord.<sup>94</sup> And if the people will but receive the man and will receive the work he is doing, to them he will be the Elijah.<sup>95</sup> In order to receive John and his work, they must lay aside all their rabbinical ideas and views of Elijah. They must lay aside all that the teachers have implanted in their minds contrary to the Spirit of the Lord.(d) They must accept what the holy Messiah has taught them of John; and they must see in the work which John does the very work which the prophet says that Elijah shall do.

40. But the leaders refuse to make such acknowledgment. They will not receive it; they do not believe it; therefore they reject the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel.<sup>96</sup> They become a rejected people.<sup>97</sup> Does not this teach a sad lesson? O church of the living God, is there not a great object-lesson here for the church and the people now?<sup>98</sup> Did not John do the work which God had laid out for the Elijah to do?

<sup>94</sup>Matt. 11: 10. <sup>95</sup>Matt. 11: 14. <sup>96</sup>Matt. 21: 38-41.

<sup>97</sup>Matt. 21: 42, 43. <sup>98</sup>1 Cor. 10: 11.

Since he did the work, why not accept the message? It was the message concerning the Messiah which God wished Israel to see and to believe, rather than to look for the man who brought it.

#### THE ORIGINAL ELIJAH AND HIS WORK

41. Yet could there have been any clearer view of the work of Elijah than was shown by John the Baptist? We are sure that the reader will not answer affirmatively, after a brief study of the work of Elijah the prophet. What was the work which God gave the original Elijah to perform? What does the Scripture say? If we turn to the Old Testament, we learn this in brief:

42. The whole of the Israelitish nation — that is, the ten tribes — had departed from the true God, and had turned to idolatry. For a long time the kings of Israel, ever since the days of Jereboam the son of Nebat, had been the leaders in this wickedness;<sup>99</sup> and this sin of idolatry reached its climax in the days of Ahab. To add to this wickedness, Ahab, the king, took to wife Jezebel; for thus saith the word of God:

"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jereboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab

<sup>99</sup>1 Kings 12: 26-33.

did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."<sup>100</sup>

43. God had been sending his prophets with messages to the different kings who were practising this evil thing; but it seemed to have very little effect upon them.<sup>101</sup> The commandments of God were almost entirely lost sight of, and the worship of the God of heaven was laid aside for the worship and the commandments of men. The Lord finally sent the prophet Elijah with His message to Ahab, telling the king that on account of his sin and of the sins of the people, there would be a drought, and for three years there would be no rain in all the land.<sup>102</sup> The king sought for the prophet Elijah in every place,<sup>103</sup> if possibly he might find him and take his life. The Lord hid the prophet in different places, till the time came for Elijah to show himself once more to the wicked king of Israel.<sup>104</sup>

44. When word was brought to the king that Elijah was found, he immediately sought to apprehend him.<sup>105</sup> But Elijah was not the man who feared Ahab; for he assured the king's servant that he would see the king himself before the day was over. And he met the king.<sup>106</sup>

45. The prophet of God was accused of being the cause of all the trouble in the land. He was ac-

<sup>100</sup>1 Kings 16: 30-33. <sup>101</sup>1 Kings 13: 1-3; 1 Kings 14: 1-16; 16: 1-7. <sup>102</sup>1 Kings 17: 1. <sup>103</sup>1 Kings 18: 7-10.

<sup>104</sup>1 Kings 17: 2, 3; 18: 1, 2. <sup>105</sup>1 Kings 18: 17.

<sup>106</sup>1 Kings 18: 15, 16.



**The Good Samaritan**

cused of being responsible for this great drought, which had killed so many cattle, and which had been the means of destroying much life and property.<sup>107</sup> Ahab accused the servant of God of being responsible for all the evils which came upon the people; their sorrows and their troubles were laid at the door of Elijah. But the prophet of God refused to accept the responsibility. The man of God would not listen to such a false charge. He knew who was responsible. Therefore he said to the king:

"I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."<sup>108</sup>

46. This idolatry was so prevalent that it had contaminated the whole of the people, and Elijah thought that he was the only person in all the realm of the kingdom of Israel that was not bowing down to these false gods, and obeying the commandments of men.<sup>109</sup> It was a terrible condition; but God assured the prophet that He had seven thousand men who were not obeying the commandments of men, but were worshipers of the true God.<sup>110</sup>

#### ELIJAH TESTING THE PEOPLE

47. Elijah then called upon the king to make a test, and the Lord of heaven should decide it. The test was accepted,<sup>111</sup> and it was proved that Ahab and all Israel were worshiping false gods, and were follow-

<sup>107</sup>1 Kings 18: 17, 18. <sup>108</sup>1 Kings 18: 18. <sup>109</sup>1 Kings 19: 14; 18: 22. <sup>110</sup>1 Kings 19: 18. <sup>111</sup>1 Kings 18: 19-25.

ing the commandments of men.<sup>112</sup> When Elijah offered the prayer for the people, that they might see their great sin, and know what a terrible thing it was to follow the commandments of men instead of obeying the commands of God, he asked the God of heaven to turn their hearts back again, that they might know He was the true God. Here is the prayer:

"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. . . . And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."<sup>113</sup>

48. We see, then, that the basis of all the trouble in Israel in the days of Elijah was that the people had become idolaters; they had accepted the commandments of men instead of following the commandments of God. While they were terribly steeped in this wicked idolatry, the true God was lost to them. They were the servants of men instead of the servants of God.

49. After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, the leaders of Israel had determined that the people of God should never again become idolaters. For this reason, during the next five hundred years, the rabbis and the Jewish leaders were busying themselves in the teaching of the law to the

<sup>112</sup>1 Kings 18: 26-35. <sup>113</sup>1 Kings 18: 36-39.

people, that they might never again depart from the worship of the true and living God. The reformation started well in the days of Ezra;<sup>114</sup> but it was not long before the masses of the people were again turned away from the living God, and were following men. The Lord raised up such men as Haggai, Zechariah, and others, and finally the prophet Malachi came. He re-proved the Jews very strongly for their departure from the true God.<sup>115</sup>

50. After this the leaders worked harder to fence the people in, that they might not become wicked any more with evil idolatry. They had men who were Pharisees, specially separated from other people; they had scribes to do the writing of the words of God for the people; they had still others who were the teachers and instructors of the people. The rabbinical schools and the theological seminaries flourished all through the country of the Jews, and wherever Jews lived in any large numbers there were seats of learning conducted by rabbis and scholars. (e)

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE TEACHERS ON THE PEOPLE

51. However, what were these leading men doing all this time? What was really being accomplished by these teachers of the people? Instead of teaching the people the simple word of God in the light of the prophecies, to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah, they were teaching them to look at the word

<sup>114</sup>See Ezra and Nehemiah. <sup>115</sup>Malachi, chapters 1 and 2.

of God in the light of rabbinical instruction and in the light of fanciful interpretation.<sup>116</sup> They added to the word of God; they substracted from it.<sup>117</sup> They piled up traditions mountain high, till the people were burdened down with the weight of the evil teachings of the men who made the laws.<sup>118</sup> It was taught by the rabbis that when Jacob was with his father-in-law, Laban, he observed six hundred thirteen commandments; and they had been growing at the same rate from that time till the present.

52. What was the result?—When the time came for Messiah to appear, the whole people were so steeped in tradition and in sin, that the commandments of God were laid aside, and the teachings of men were substituted.<sup>119</sup> While the professed people of God were not bowing down to wood and stone, they were bowing down to men.<sup>120</sup> They were in the bondage of the slavery of men;<sup>121</sup> therefore they were following the commandments of men instead of the commandments of God. Instead of observing the commandment referring to the Sabbath, they were obliged to observe nearly four hundred commandments touching the Sabbath.(f) Every one of the commandments were set aside in order that the precepts of men might be followed out. This had reached such a state that there had become recognized among the people two forms of religious teaching. One was

<sup>116</sup>Mark 7: 1-5. <sup>117</sup>Mark 7: 7-13. <sup>118</sup>Matt. 23: 2-4.

<sup>119</sup>Matt. 15: 7-9. <sup>120</sup>Matt. 23: 7, 8. <sup>121</sup>John 8: 32-36.



known as the written word, the other was known as the oral law. From three to five times as much time was spent in studying the oral law, the teachings of men, as in the study of the commandments of God. The plain simple teaching of the commandments of God had become so intricate that the ordinary man could not understand its meaning, because of the strange and fanciful interpretation which had been placed upon it.<sup>122</sup>(g)

53. The people were taught by the rabbis that no part of the Scripture must be understood in merely one way. There were many ways of interpreting and expounding the Bible. Each rabbi of note had his own way of explaining the word of God: and though there were hardly two rabbis who were agreed, the people must view all the interpretations as equally important, even though they brought confusion to the minds of the learners.

#### ERRONEOUS TEACHING OF GOD'S COMMANDS

54. The leaders had caused the people to turn away from the commandments of God, and had turned them to the traditions of men. They were worshiping men, and were bowing down to the ideas and whims of men.<sup>123</sup> They had lost the spiritual meaning of the law of God, and had become worshipers of the teachings of men.<sup>124</sup>

55. The commandment to honor parents was in-

<sup>122</sup>2 Cor. 3: 6; Col. 2: 20-23. <sup>123</sup>Isa. 29: 9-14.

<sup>124</sup>Matt. 5: 19, 20.

terpreted to mean that it was not a sacred obligation to obey the parents, as given in the word of God; for that command, like all the other commandments, must be understood in the light of rabbinical instruction.<sup>125</sup> A rabbi must be honored more than one's father. Yes, the rabbi must receive honor equal with God. The rabbi had almost become as a god to the people.

56. In view of these facts, and many more which might be given, the whole Jewish people had become a nation of men-servers.<sup>126</sup> They had forsaken God in order to serve men. Sins of the worst forms were being perpetrated in the name of religion, and all these iniquities were being covered up by the cloak of piety.<sup>127</sup> Surely, if ever there was a time when the Elijah message was needed, if ever there was a time when a man like Elijah was in demand to rebuke the people and the leaders for their sins and iniquities, that time was ripe just preceding the first advent of our Lord. John the Baptist, therefore, came at the proper time. The angel from heaven had announced the intention of God to send just the man with the right form of message, and John was selected to do this work. He was the Elijah to the people of that generation. The people never would be ready for the Messiah, until they realized how much their hearts needed to be turned back again to God. There

<sup>125</sup>Matt. 15: 4-6. <sup>126</sup>John 7: 13; 9: 22; 12: 42;  
9: 34. <sup>127</sup>Matt. 23: 14.

was a work of reformation and preparation, before they were ready for the Messiah.

#### EFFECT OF JOHN'S MESSAGE

57. So when John the Baptist came to the people, he told them that they must repent.<sup>128</sup> He told them that to be Abrahamites was not sufficient.<sup>129</sup> (*h*) The time had come when the axe must be laid at the root of the trees. He told the people that they must bring forth fruits meet for repentance.<sup>130</sup> He warned them to flee from the wrath to come.<sup>131</sup> He made bare to them their sins, in order that they might be prepared when the Messiah came. Even though his name was John, his work was that of Elijah, and if they only had had spiritual discernment, they would have had revealed to them that the work he was doing was the very work which Elijah had done in his day; therefore this man was doing the work of Elijah for their day. He had come to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord.<sup>132</sup>

58. Being steeped in the traditions of men, and being led by the rabbis and teachers, the masses of the people dared not think for themselves. They were afraid to even acknowledge that the message of John was the real message. While doubtless there were many who believed in their hearts that the work John was doing was perfectly in harmony with the work described by the prophet Malachi, it was not re-

<sup>128</sup>Matt. 3: 1, 2. <sup>129</sup>Matt. 3: 9. <sup>130</sup>Matt. 3: 8.

<sup>131</sup>Matt. 3: 7. <sup>132</sup>Matt. 3: 3.

ceiving the sanction of the rabbis and the Pharisees; therefore they dared not accept it.

59. The lower and the poorer classes saw that this man had a message, and many of them believed it was the message from Heaven for the time. They accepted John and his message; and they were ready to hear the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, when He came.<sup>188</sup> There was a close relation between the believing of the message of John and believing the message which Jesus the Messiah brought. To receive the first, was to believe the second; to reject John, was to turn aside from the Saviour.

#### JOHN'S MESSAGE THE TRUE MESSAGE

60. We see, therefore, that every specification of the prophecy which applied to the Elijah message of Malachi was being worked out by John. He was the messenger who had come with the message of Elijah to the people. His message, if accepted, would have turned the hearts of the fathers to the children. It would have turned the hearts of the children to the fathers. It would have brought to the people a true understanding of the word of God, so that they would have seen many of the prophecies in their true light. It would have turned the hearts of the people away from men, and toward the Lord God of Israel. It would have wrought exactly the reformation which the Holy Spirit intended it should have wrought, as predicted in the word of God.

<sup>188</sup>Luke 7: 29.

61. When Jesus came, He acknowledged that it was even so. He said that Elijah must first come and restore all things; but he added:

"Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. . . . Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."<sup>134</sup>

Furthermore; before they could receive the Messiah, or even be ready to welcome him, they must receive Elijah the prophet and his warning of preparation.

62. Therefore Jesus said to them:

"And if ye will receive it, this *is Elias*, which was for to come."<sup>135</sup>

What must they do? — They must receive this man John the Baptist and his work as the Elijah of Malachi, which the prophet said should come and prepare the way of the Lord. This was imperative; for if they did not receive Elijah, they would not receive the Messiah. Here is what Jesus said to them touching this matter:

"Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."<sup>136</sup>

63. Yes, because they would not receive the Elijah as manifest in the work of John, they would not receive Jesus as the Messiah. Because they did not receive the work of Elijah, they did not receive the Messiah. They sought to persecute the Elijah in his day; they therefore sought to persecute the Messiah.

<sup>134</sup>Matt. 17: 12, 13.    <sup>135</sup>Matt. 11: 14.

<sup>136</sup>Matt. 17: 12.



**Sprinkling the Blood at Passover**

**JEWS STILL LOOKING FOR ELIJAH**

64. It is a singular fact that to this very day the pious of the Jews still believe that the Messiah can not

come till Elijah comes, believing the very same as did the disciples when they asked the Messiah the question at their return from the transfiguration experience. They are therefore praying for God to send to them Elijah the prophet, that they may have the assurance that the Messiah is on His way.

65. Every Passover, at the supper table, the family rise from their seats, led by the father of the house. Each person takes the cup of wine in his hand, the father also takes a plate in his hand. The command is given by the father that the door shall be opened. As the door is opened, the family together exclaim:

“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

They hope that Elijah will enter to tell them that Messiah is on his way, and they hope that Elijah will come right at that time in connection with the Pass-over.

66. But the Jewish people have been waiting a long time for the Elijah to come; they have waited for more than two thousand years; and they may have to wait for many more thousand years to come and go, if the world were to stand that length of time, and even then Elijah would not come according to their view of his appearing.<sup>137</sup> And why?—Because he came at the proper time, in harmony with the prophecy of the word of God. He restored and fulfilled all things, as the prophet Malachi predicted, and as the

<sup>137</sup>John 8: 24.

Messiah indicated. Elijah had come; the Messiah's way was prepared; all things in connection with the first advent of Messiah were fulfilled.<sup>120</sup>

67. The Jewish church at that time was in need of the work of Elijah the prophet. Any person who is familiar with the writings of the Talmud knows full well that the teachings of God's word are mingled with the doctrines of men. The professed church of God needed to understand the true meaning of the commandments of God; and Elijah, in the person of John the Baptist, had come to instruct them.

#### LESSONS FROM ISRAEL FOR THE CHURCH NOW

68. The sad history of the Jewish people from that time, the time of the first advent of the Messiah, to this very day, is a strong commentary on the text of Malachi's prophecy concerning Elijah the prophet. They have felt that the professed Christian world has troubled them, even as Ahab accused Elijah of troubling the people. They have repeatedly said that Christ and His followers were the cause of all their sorrows and their troubles. While it is true that many terrible things have been done in the name of the Christian religion, which never should have been done, neither have received divine sanction,(i) it is nevertheless true that if Israel had only accepted the Elijah and his message at the time when he came, the word of God would have had a different story to tell, and

<sup>120</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.



all subsequent history would have been differently written. Jesus wept for the people because He knew the penalty of their rejecting the Elijah and his message in their day.<sup>139</sup> He knew full well that they would reject Him, their Messiah, and their only hope; and to reject Him was to bring all forms of woes and sorrows upon themselves. He did not want to give them up. He pleaded with them; He wooed them; He besought them to accept Him.<sup>140</sup> For three years and more He labored and toiled with and for them, that they might see in Him the Messiah, and in John the work of the Elijah for their day.<sup>141</sup> But they would not. They cast Him aside; they thrust Him away. How sad and how pitiful it is to think of the results!<sup>142</sup>

69. And is there not a great and forcible lesson in this truth for the church of to-day? Has not all that history been written for the learning and the benefit of the church of Christ in these latter times?<sup>143</sup> Was all that instruction given merely for the times of those people? The canon of Scripture closed at the end of the first century; but the church of Christ continued, and still continues to the present time.<sup>144</sup> Is there not, therefore, some valuable lesson to be learned from the history of John the Baptist and from the people at that time, by the children of God and

<sup>139</sup>Luke 23: 27-30. <sup>140</sup>Luke 19: 41-44; Matt. 23: 37.

<sup>141</sup>Luke 13: 6-9. <sup>142</sup>Luke 19: 14, 27. <sup>143</sup>Rom. 15: 4;

1 Cor. 10: 11. <sup>144</sup>Matt. 16: 18; 28: 18-20.

by the church now? We believe the word of God teaches that there is. Shall we not find it and benefit by it?

70. We are told in the book of Malachi that God will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.<sup>145</sup> The Jewish people and their leaders taught that the coming of Elijah meant that the world would come to an end, by the ushering in of the Messiah.<sup>146</sup> But there were other prophecies in the Scriptures which declared that Messiah must first come and suffer for the people.<sup>147</sup> There were many parts of the word of God which plainly taught that Messiah must die for the sins of the human race.<sup>148</sup> The Scriptures clearly revealed that Messiah must come and give His life a sacrifice and a substitute for men.<sup>149</sup> There was a work of preparation by Elijah the prophet to turn the hearts of the people to the Lord, that they might be ready to meet Him, in order to receive the forgiveness of their sins.<sup>150</sup> The work of Elijah at that time was a work of preparation for the first advent of the Messiah, for His coming to die for the sins of the people.<sup>151</sup> Where could God make this truth more plain than by placing this message in the last book of the Old Testament? How could the truth be more indelibly impressed than by showing the people that the

<sup>145</sup>Mal. 4: 5, 6.      <sup>146</sup>Matt. 24: 3.      <sup>147</sup>Isa. 53: 4-6.

<sup>148</sup>Isa. 53: 10.

<sup>149</sup>Isa. 53: 7.

<sup>150</sup>Matt. 3: 11, 12.      <sup>151</sup>John 1: 29, 36.

last message of hope He had for His church was that the Messiah would surely come; and to prepare them for that coming, He would send Elijah the prophet? The closing book of Old Testament Scripture was to be the book which should be the preparatory one for the coming of Elijah and for the coming of Messiah.<sup>152</sup>

71. But the children of Israel lost sight of His coming as a suffering Saviour and a sorrowing Messiah. They overlooked the fact that he must come to bear our burdens, and to carry our sorrows.<sup>153</sup> They overlooked that He was to be smitten for us, and that through his stripes healing was to come to us.<sup>154</sup> Because they did not regard this phase of the work of the Messiah, they were not prepared to receive the message of Elijah nor the work of the Messiah when He came.

#### ELIJAH'S WORK TO BE COMPLETED

72. Since this is so, there must be a further work of Elijah for the church to do before the Messiah shall return in power and great glory. The day of the Lord is surely coming; for thus saith the prophet:

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness."<sup>155</sup>

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled

<sup>152</sup>Malachi, chapter 1 to 4. <sup>153</sup>Isa. 63:9.

<sup>154</sup>Isa. 53:4, 5. <sup>155</sup>Zeph. 1:14, 15.

together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"<sup>186</sup>

73. We know from the word of God that this was not the way the Messiah came when He was here at the first advent. John the Baptist, the Elijah of his time, did not warn the people of any such coming of the Lord of glory. When the angels came to warn the shepherds of the coming of the Messiah, they brought the good news of peace to earth. Their song was:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."<sup>187</sup>

He came at that time to reveal the lovely character of His Father, God.<sup>188</sup> He came to show to men the great love of God in giving His own life for a sinful world.<sup>189</sup> He appeared to die for sin and for sinners, and in this way He came to give peace and happiness to all mankind, if they would but receive Him.<sup>190</sup> The work of Elijah at that time was to have men see the need of their turning away from their sins, that

<sup>186</sup>Rev. 6: 14-17.    <sup>187</sup>Luke 2: 14.    <sup>188</sup>John 14: 7-9.

<sup>189</sup>John 3: 16, 17.    <sup>190</sup>1 Cor. 15: 3;

Rom. 5: 8; Gal. 1: 4.

they might be ready to receive this blessed experience the Messiah was bringing.<sup>161</sup>

74. The second appearing of our Lord is to be a different advent. It is to be a time of terrible woe and disaster to the wicked and to the ungodly.<sup>162</sup> It is a time of destruction and desolation.<sup>163</sup> But the word of God says that before the coming of the dreadful and terrible day of the Lord, Elijah shall appear.<sup>164</sup> Since there was need of Elijah at the time of the first advent of the Messiah to warn the people to be ready for the first coming of the Lord, since Israel at that time was given the message of Elijah, — a message of repentance through John the Baptist, — to prepare them for the glorious first advent of our Saviour, must there not be an Elijah message for the church and people of God at the present time, to prepare them for the return of our Lord? We know from the Scripture that God sent such a message to the church at the time of the appearing of Christ on earth, and we know how that message was treated by the majority. We know how that message was regarded by the church at that time, and we have learned why it was thus treated. Should we not take heed from that experience?

#### A MESSAGE BEFORE THE RETURN OF OUR LORD

75. There certainly must be a message of Elijah for the church prior to the second advent of the Mes-

<sup>161</sup>John 3: 27-36. <sup>162</sup>2 Thess. 1: 7-10; 2: 8.

<sup>163</sup>Isa. 33: 13-16. <sup>164</sup>Mal. 4: 5, 6.

siah; for the Word says that Elijah will come to prepare a people for His coming. He must come twice.<sup>165</sup> He came once,<sup>166</sup> and was preceded by the Elijah message. He is to come again;<sup>167</sup> and in the very nature of things, His coming must be preceded by a similar message. The Jewish church made the sad mistake at that time of looking for a man instead of for a message. The angel Gabriel said it was to be the message of Elijah with the spirit and power of that prophet, and the angel also indicated the nature of the message. Must we not now, therefore, find in the Scriptures of truth an Elijah message prior to the second coming of the Lord? Should we not be careful lest we look for a man instead of for a message? Should we not give heed, and seek the Spirit of God to guide us into all truth,<sup>168</sup> that we may be guarded, and not be biased by men instead of following the word of God?

76. Is there any need of an Elijah message at the present time? We learn from the word of God that Elijah's message was to turn the people away from the commandments of men to the commandments of God. Is there any worshiping of man at the present time instead of worshiping God? There is scarcely need for a reply, for nearly all are conversant with present-day conditions in the spiritual world. When we observe how man has come to be revered, and the

<sup>165</sup>Heb. 9: 28. <sup>166</sup>Heb. 9: 28. <sup>167</sup>John 14: 1-3.

<sup>168</sup>John 14: 16, 17, 26.

word of God set aside, we clearly discern that the commandments of men are much more predominant than the commandments of God. We see that many in religious circles are seeking to enforce the traditions of men rather than to teach obedience to the commandments of God. There certainly is great need of a definite Elijah message to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and to make a people ready for the coming of the Messiah.

77. Where should we look for such a message? Since the time is here when such a message is needed, where should it be found? We found that the Elijah message prior to the first advent of the Messiah was in the last book of the Old Testament. Where should we naturally look for the Elijah message at the present time, the message to turn the people to the commandments of God and to prepare them for the coming of the Son of God? We would say by analogy, in the last book of the New Testament. We find that the last book of the Old Testament repeatedly speaks of the coming of the Messiah.<sup>169</sup> This was the book which, in a special manner was to prepare the church for the Lord of glory, and for the work of Elijah. We should, therefore, expect that the closing book of the New Testament would deal especially with the return of our Lord, and the work of preparation for that event. Even so do we find it. The whole drift of the last book of the Bible is touching the return of our

<sup>169</sup>Rev. 1:7; 22:20.

Lord in power and glory. Nearly every chapter has something to tell concerning the return of our Master to gather His children. Should we not, then, expect that in this book there would be a message, an Elijah message, a message of preparation, prior to His return?

78. Such a message we do find in this blessed book and here it is:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and



their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."<sup>170</sup>

79. It appears from the words of this message that men had been worshiping other than the true God;<sup>171</sup> now the attention of the people is called to the God of heaven. This is exactly what Elijah the prophet did. In the words of this message we find a people developed who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.<sup>172</sup> This is what the people did in the days of Elijah when they had renounced Baal and his worship, and had their hearts turned again to the true and living God.<sup>173</sup>

#### THE EFFECT OF GOD'S MESSAGE NOW

80. In the days of Elijah men had been bowing down to wood and stone; in the days of the first advent of the Messiah men had been worshiping men;<sup>174</sup> in these days we find that men are bowing down and worshiping the power the Bible calls, the beast and his image.<sup>175</sup> The work of reformation is the same in all ages. Elijah was called of God to warn the

<sup>170</sup>Rev. 14: 6-16.      <sup>171</sup>Rev. 14: 7.      <sup>172</sup>Rev. 14: 12.

<sup>173</sup>1 Kings 18: 39; John 17: 3; 10: 30.

<sup>174</sup>Jas. 2: 1-4. <sup>175</sup>Rev. 14: 9-11.

people against false worship. They were worshipping another god; they were breaking the commandments of God. John the Baptist, the Elijah of his day, was sent from heaven to warn the people of that time against following the traditions of men. He was sent to prepare the people for the first advent of the Messiah.

In this antitypical day of the fulfilment of all things, when the Master is to complete the work for mankind, the message of Elijah is going forth to the professed church of Christ, to prepare the people for the great and terrible day of the Lord, by calling their attention to the worship of the true and living God, and by appealing to them not to violate or disobey the commands of God. The Bible is very clear that before the coming of the Messiah the second time, this will be the Elijah message of preparation.

81. Should not the church of Christ then, at this day, beware that it listens not to those who call themselves Elijah, whether it be in the form of pomp, ostentation, display, or outward show, or whether it be in the form of teachings of men not in harmony with the true character of the word of God? In view of the lessons of the experience of Israel, should not the church of Christ now ascertain the real character of Elijah the prophet and of his work? It is clear from the Scriptures of truth that here is the message to prepare the church and the world for the appearing of the Lord and Saviour Jesus, the Messiah,

the Holy One of Israel. When this message finishes its work, then the next event for which we are to look is the coming of the Lord.<sup>176</sup> As soon as John the Baptist finished his work of preparation, Jesus came and announced Himself as the Messiah. As soon as Elijah had borne his message to Ahab and to Israel, then the people were turned towards the Lord their God. We see, likewise, that as soon as this message brought to view in Revelation completes its work, and the world is warned of the worship of the true and the living God, and the dangers threatening those who worship the false powers, the Lord comes to reap the harvest, and to gather the wheat in his garner.<sup>177</sup>

82. What a wonderful truth is here revealed! Even to-day the Master stands at the door and knocks.<sup>178</sup> Jesus told the disciples, that Elijah was already come, and they knew him not.<sup>179</sup> Let us beware that we recognize by the Holy Spirit the Elijah of the present day. Truly Elijah is come already. He is here. It is not a man; it is this blessed message of preparation for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Messiah. May we be made ready for Him at His glorious appearing, through this precious message of Elijah the prophet as God has given it to His people for to-day.<sup>180</sup> Would that Israel had learned the message in her day. It will be well with us if we learn the lessons for the church of to-day.

<sup>176</sup>Rev. 14: 14. <sup>177</sup>Matt. 13: 39-41. <sup>178</sup>Rev. 3: 20.

<sup>179</sup>Matt. 17: 12. <sup>180</sup>Isa. 25: 9.

## CHAPTER XIX

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## Paragraph 4

a. The Talmud teaches the following concerning this school of Elijah:

"Tradition of the school of Elijah: the world is to stand six thousand years; two thousand years confusion, two thousand years the law, two thousand years the days of the Messiah: but on account of our sins, which have so multiplied, there have elapsed of them so many as have already elapsed (without Messiah appearing)." — "*The Talmud, What It Is*," by Pick.

Again:

"Elijah said to Rav [meaning Rabbi] Judah, brother of Rav Sallah, the pious; the world can not last less than eighty-five jubilees, and in the last jubilee the son of David [that means the Messiah] comes. At the beginning or the end of it? He replied: I know not.

"Will the whole time have already passed or not? I know not." — *Ibid.*

## Paragraph 16

b. The reader will doubtless be glad to learn a little more of the Sanhedrin and their work. According to the Talmud, we find that this body is the basis of all authority in the Jewish church.

"The Great Council in Jerusalem is the foundation-stone of the oral law, and the pillars of the doctrine: and from them the statute and the judgment goes forth to all Israel. They have the warrant of the law, for it is said, 'According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee,' . . . which is an affirmative precept, and every one who believes in Moses our master, and in his law, is bound to rest the practise of the law on them, and to lean on them." — "*Hilchoth Mamrim*."

Here is what is said concerning the enforcement of their authority:

“When a Great Council has decided by one of the rules, and according to the best of their judgment, that the judgment is so and so, and has passed sentence: if there arise after them another council of a contrary opinion, the latter may reverse the sentence. . . . But if a council decree



**A Rabbinical Sabbath Evening Blessing**

a decree, or ordain an ordinance, or sanction a custom, and the thing has spread in all Israel; and there arise after them another council, which wishes to abrogate the former things, and to root out that ordinance, decree, or custom, it is not permitted, unless they excel the former in wisdom and in number." — *Ibid.*

That the people may believe the Sanhedrin have divine authority, the following claims are made by the rabbis:

"Although the oral law was not written, Moses our master taught it all in his council to the seventy elders; Eleazar also, and Phinehas, and Joshua, all three, received it from Moses. But to Joshua, who was the disciple of Moses our master, he delivered the oral law, and gave him a charge concerning it. In like manner Joshua taught it by word of mouth all the days of his life; and many elders received it from Joshua, and Eli received it from the elders, and from Phinehas." — *Preface to the "Yad Hachashak."*

#### Paragraph 28

c. The rabbis claim that the authority of the Sanhedrin was so great that they had the right to make the following law, and it must be obeyed:

"Yea, though they should tell thee of the right hand, that it is the left, and of the left hand, that it is the right." — "*Hilchoth Sanhedrin.*"

#### Paragraph 30

d. For more detailed information of the teaching of the rabbis to the Jewish children, see chapter 2, "From Judaism to Christianity," by the same author.

#### Paragraph 30

e. The Sanhedrin made the following law for Jews who lived in certain communities:

"In every city of Israel that contains one hundred twenty Israelites or more, a minor Sanhedrin ought to be appointed, and of how many members ought it to consist? — Of twenty-three judges." — "*Hilchoth Sanhedrin.*"

**Paragraph 52**

f. In the Talmudic tract, entitled, "*Shabbath*," Sabbath, there are twenty-four chapters, containing one hundred thirty-seven sections. This tract does not include the tract, "*Erubin*," Mixture, which contains ninety-six sections, and which deals with permissions and explanations concerning the Sabbath. Neither does this tract include the tract, "*Pesachim*," ninety sections, dealing with the Passover festivals, and what is allowable in connection with the Passover and the Sabbath. The tract "*Shabbath*," Sabbath with its one hundred thirty-seven sections contains hundreds of laws touching the observance of the Sabbath; and any law that was violated contained a punishment which generally meant flogging; that is, forty stripes save one.

g. See chapter 4, "From Judaism to Christianity."

**Paragraph 57**

h. See pages 372, 373, "From Judaism to Christianity," how the Jews regarded Abraham.

**Paragraph 68**

i. In chapter 22, pages 305-315, "From Judaism to Christianity," will be found valuable information concerning the persecutions of the Jews by professedly Christian people.